

THE RETURN OF PEDRO MORALES

October 1980
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Wrestler

THE

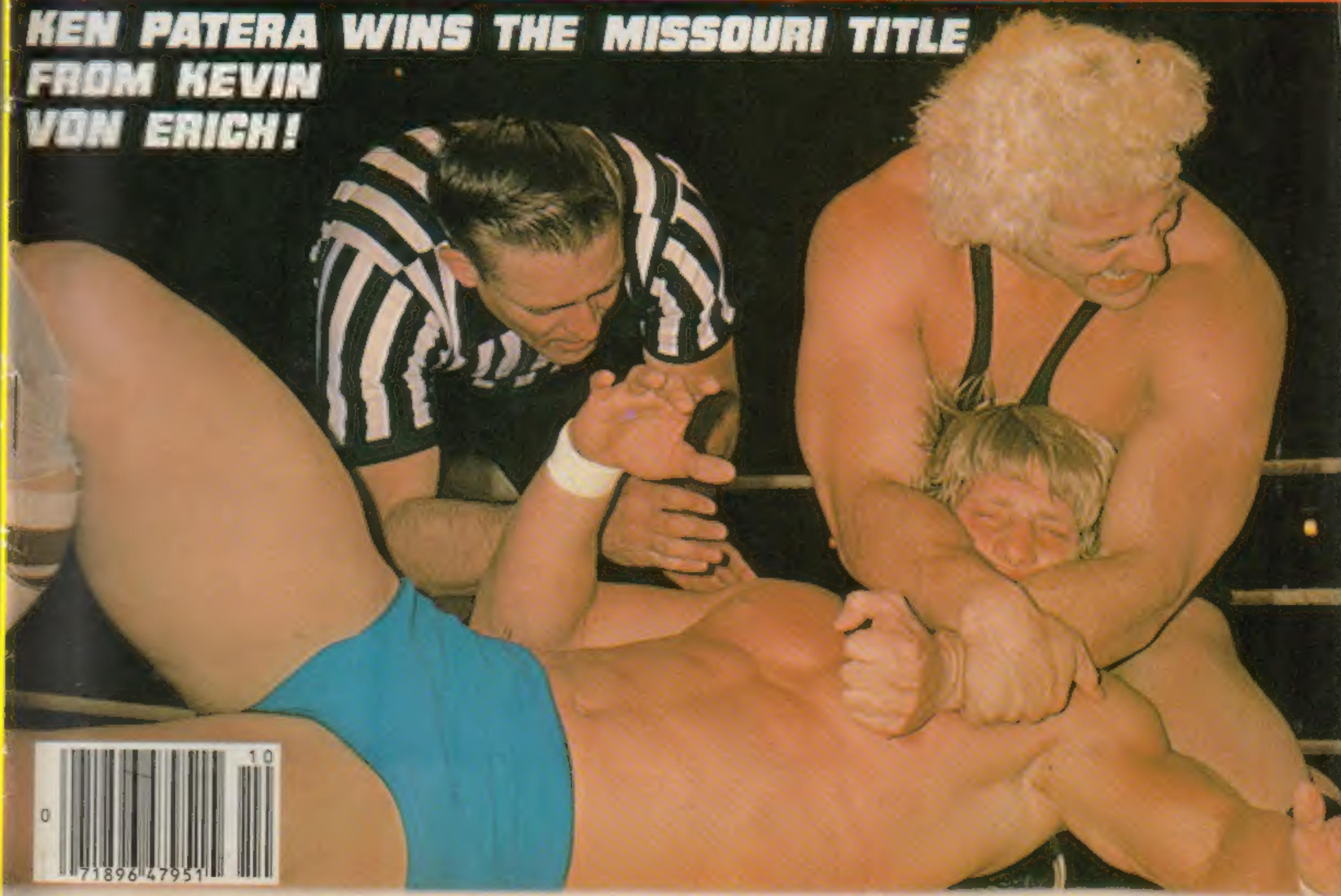


DUSTY
RHODES
PROVES HE'D
DIE FOR A
FRIEND

IS MR.
WRESTLING II
A HERO
WITHOUT
HOPE?



KEN PATERA WINS THE MISSOURI TITLE
FROM KEVIN
VON ERICH!



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

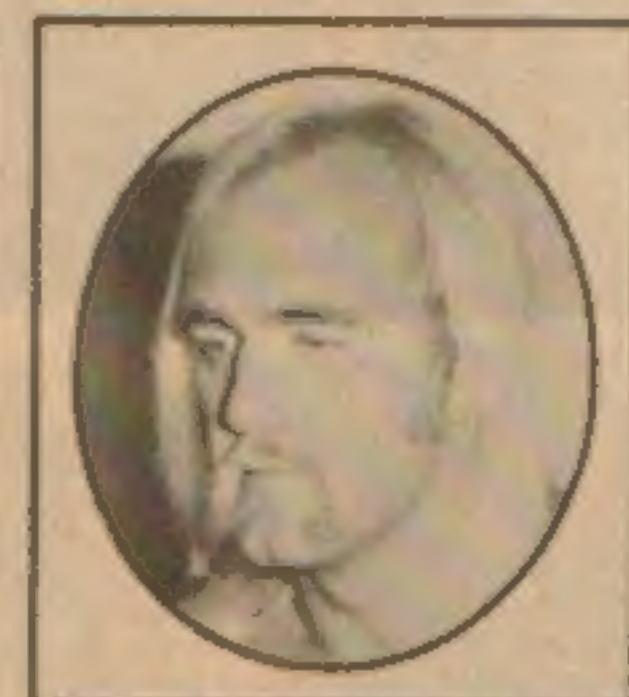
- Champion: BOB BACKLUND
1—LARRY ZBYSZKO
2—KEN PATERA
3—HULK HOGAN
4—Ivan PUTSKI
5—PAT PATTERSON
6—TONY ATLAS
7—PEDRO MORALES
8—TOR KAMATA
9—BOBBY DUNCUM
10—SIKA THE SAMOAN

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

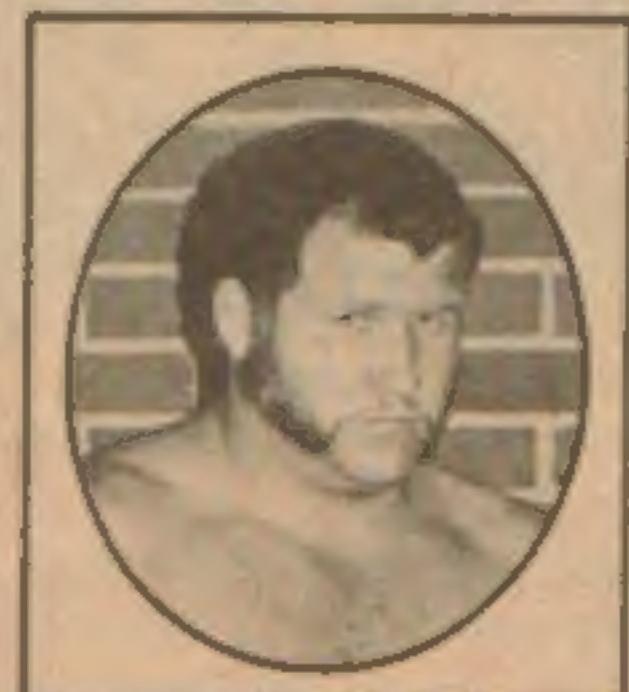
- Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL
1—MAD DOG VACHON
2—DINO BRAVO
3—VERNE GAGNE
4—CRUSHER
5—GREG GAGNE
6—SUPER DESTROYER II
7—JIM VALIANT
8—JESSE VENTURA
9—ADRIAN ADONIS
10—STEVE OLSONOWSKI

MOST POPULAR

- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT
2—DUSTY RHODES
3—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
4—MR. WRESTLING II
5—BOB BACKLUND
6—BUGSY McGRAW
7—RICK STEAMBOAT
8—Ivan PUTSKI
9—MIL MASCARAS
10—AUSTIN IDOL



HULK HOGAN



HARLEY RACE



DINO BRAVO



ANDRE THE GIANT

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: HARLEY RACE
1—MANNY FERNANDEZ
2—DUSTY RHODES
3—RIC FLAIR
4—KEN PATERA
5—HUSSEIN ARAB
6—TED DIBIASE
7—BARON VON RASCHKE
8—MR. WRESTLING II
9—TERRY FUNK
10—DICK MURDOCH

TAG TEAMS

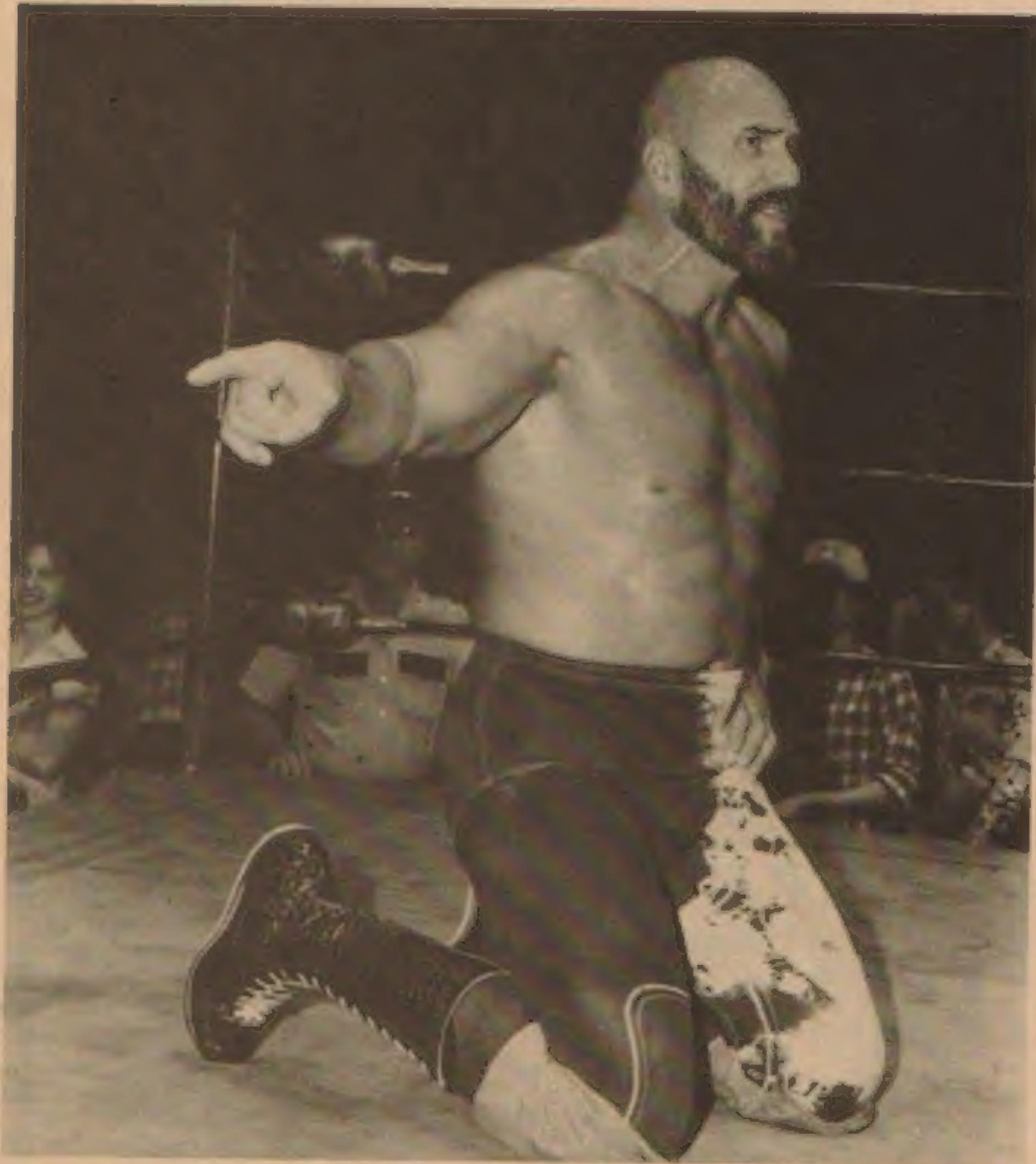
- 1—THE SAMOANS
2—JIMMY SNUKA & RAY STEVENS
3—VERNE GAGNE & MAD DOG VACHON
4—THE ASSASSINS
5—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
6—RICK STEAMBOAT & JAY YOUNGBLOOD
7—MR. HITO & MR. SAKURADA
8—THE MASKED SUPERSTARS
9—JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS
10—BUZZ SAWYER & MATT BORNE

MOST HATED

- 1—LARRY ZBYSZKO
2—ERNIE LADD
3—TERRY FUNK
4—BARON VON RASCHKE
5—KEN PATERA
6—HULK HOGAN
7—HARLEY RACE
8—NICK BOCKWINKEL
9—EDDY MANSFIELD
10—SUPER DESTROYER

YOU ASKED US

Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: **YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.** Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!



Superstar Graham tells reader Bob Stoner that his new appearance is part of his improved image. Superstar warns all champions that he is tougher than ever.

Q: "Who invented the sleeper-hold?"—John Brown, Shelbyville, IN

A: Several wrestlers claim creation of the sleeper, including Verne Gagne, Don Curtis, Mark Lewin and a few Japanese wrestlers like Professor Toru Tanaka. However, Gagne's use may have been the earliest.

Q: "Where is S.D. Jones wrestling now?"—Gary Grout, Little Falls, NJ

A: Currently, Jones wrestles in the Carolinas and Virginia. The popular grappler sends regards to all his fans and says he misses all his loyal supporters.

Q: "Does Mil Mascaras intend to unmask The Assassin in their future bouts?"—Billy Ruoto, Orange, NJ

A: "Billy, I would like nothing better than to tear the mask off that animal and show the whole world the lunatic living behind that gruesome mask," replied Mascaras.

Q: "Why did Superstar Billy Graham change his physical appearance?"—Bob Stoner, Greensburg, PA

A: We decided to allow Graham to answer this question. "This is the new and improved Superstar, better than ever, tougher than ever, stronger than ever. No man alive can stop me. I know improving on greatness sounds difficult, but to the Superstar, nothing is too tough, too strong, no problem insurmountable. I am the best and greatest and all champions should cower (Continued on page 52)

WHAT'S HAPPENING

By BILL APTER

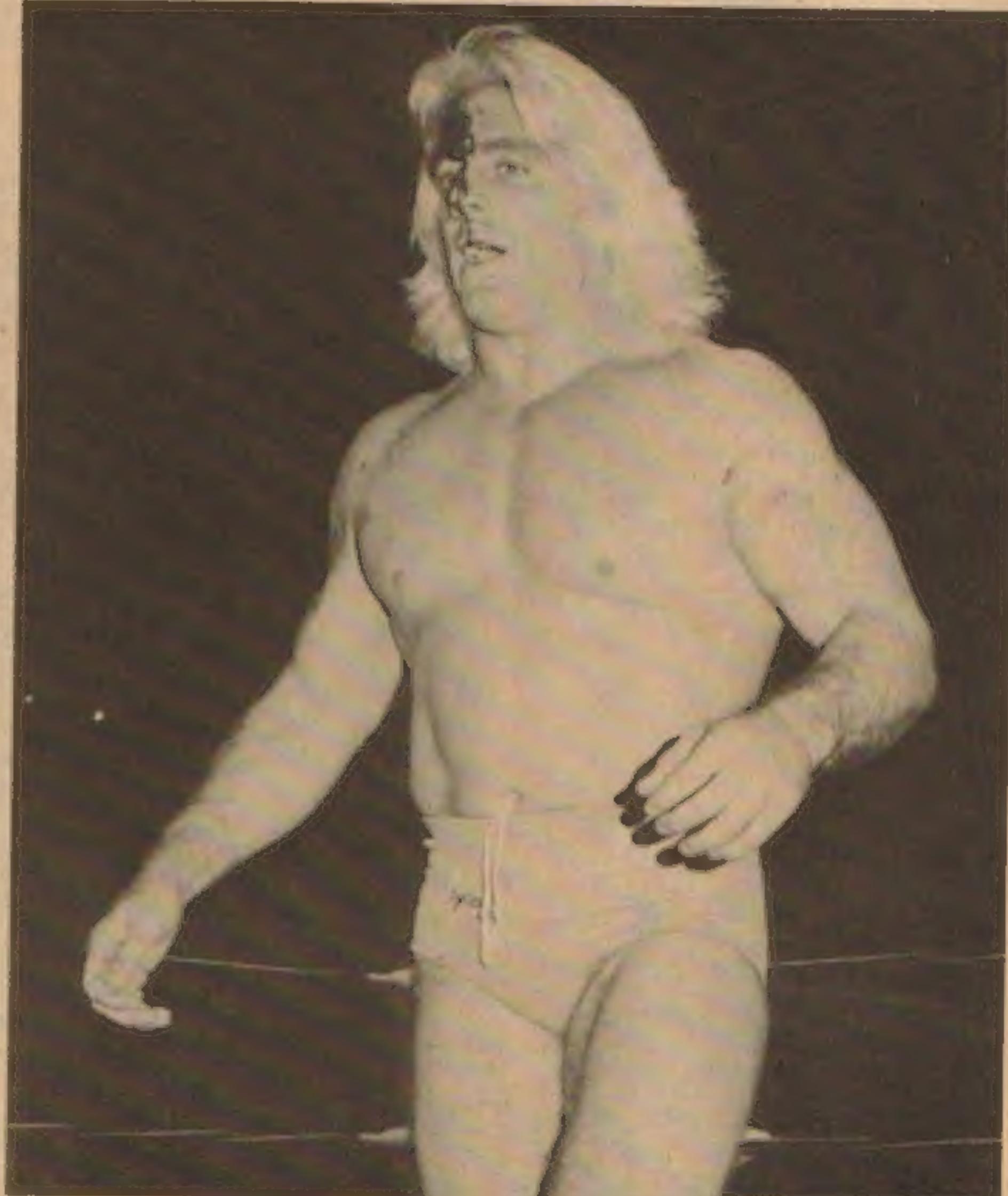
THE IMMENSE HATRED between United States Champion Ric Flair and his former ally Greg Valentine has hit a furious fever pitch. Valentine has broken Flair's nose and now Ric has vowed to put a halt to Valentine's career.

"Before this happened I just wanted to beat him, show him I was the better man," Flair said in an exclusive interview with THE WRESTLER staff. "That's all in the past now. I want Valentine's career ended by my fists. I will beat that man bloody until he can never step into a squared circle again. Greg Valentine, your days in your chosen profession are over!"

Valentine's side: "Crybaby Flair, if you can't take the rough edges of this sport, a sport of kings, not pawns like you, get out. Take up interior decorating or knitting. Those professions fit a no-talented wrestler like you!" It's hot and heavy war from here on in fans!

War has also gotten hotter between Bruno Sammartino and Larry Zbyszko. Bruno demands he be locked in a cage to do combat against the young man he started in the wrestling game. "Every time I wrestle that scum of the earth

(Continued on page 47)



Ric Flair bleeds from the forehead and nose after a brutal attack by Greg Valentine. Flair, who had to have the broken nose repaired, vows to put an end to the career of the man he once teamed with.

CORRESPONDENTS Reports

DENVER, CO—*Correspondent:* Eddie Vives—AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel and Crusher have been battling for months. In recent matches, Bockwinkel captures the title bouts while Crusher wins the non-title fights. This cage match was a non-title bout. Bockwinkel tried to wrestle scientifically but it was a brawl all the way. Crusher bled first when Bockwinkel slammed his head into the ringpost. Crusher went wild, cracking Bockwinkel's head and tearing open the cut with his hands. Bockwinkel never recovered and Crusher won the decision.

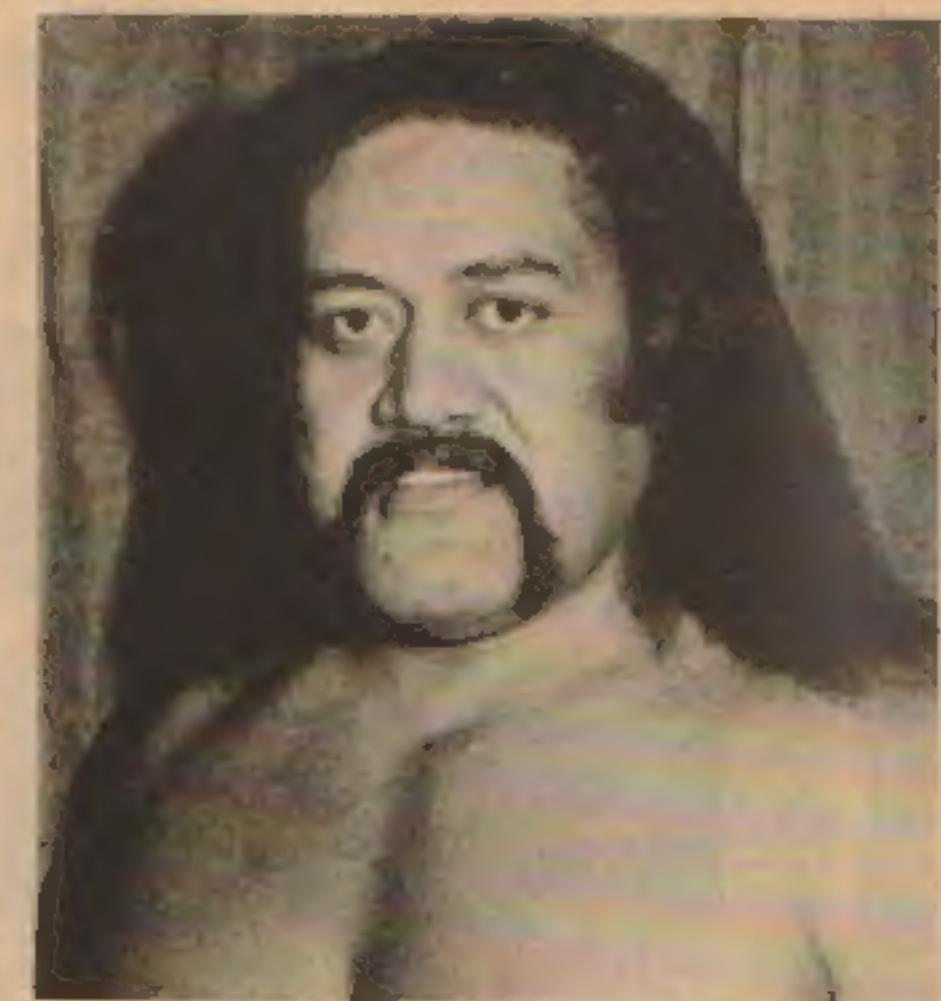
In other matches, Jesse Ventura and Adrian Adonis bested Greg Gagne and Wahoo McDaniel . . . Steve Olsonowski stopped Billy

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

Howard . . . A double disqualification resulted in the Jerry Blackwell-Dino Bravo bout.

COMMACK, NY—Correspondent: Daniel Brown—A revenge match between Ivan Putski and Afa the Samoan. Ivan Putski



Afa the Samoan was disqualified in his match with Ivan Putski for refusing to break a chokehold.

grabbed an early advantage by stomping, hitting, and throwing Afa out of the ring. Putski dominated most of the match. Afa, however, resorted to illegal tactics and near the end had Putski on the ropes in a chokehold. But the referee disqualified the Samoan, handing Putski a tough victory.

In other bouts, Dave O'Hannon got by Manuel Soto . . . Rick McGraw upended Jose Estrada . . . Mark Pole overcame Angelo Gomez . . . Gorilla Monsoon battered Baron Scicluna . . . Sika the Samoan stomped Dominic DeNucci.

LAREDO, TX—Correspondent: Lino Nuncio—Southwest champion Tully Blanchard teamed with Black Gordman in a cage match against Wahoo McDaniel and Mil Mascaras. This turned out to be one of the bloodiest matches ever seen in the Southwest. For about one hour, these four top stars battered each other from one end of the ring to the other. At the conclusion, only McDaniel and Mascaras stood and left the arena, leaving their foes bloody and injured.

In other matches, Tom Jones beat Hussein the Butcher . . . Nick Bockwinkel successfully defended his AWA title against Scott Casey . . . The Spoiler destroyed Relampago Leon . . . Eddy Mansfield defeated Apollo Estrada.

(Continued on page 54)



Crusher applies a stomach claw in a non-title match with AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel. Weeks later Crusher won a cage match on cuts.

Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame

Thumbs Up



THUMBS DOWN to Jesse Ventura: When will wrestlers realize one cannot live life as if it were a barroom brawl? Ventura lacks any feel for the delicate, subtle aspects of wrestling. His ruthless, single-minded approach consists of eye-gouging and groin-kneeing. Surely wrestling would be better off without this sort of man.



THUMBS DOWN to The Great Mephisto: Many wrestling observers believe The Great Mephisto represents a grave danger to the sport. Surely his demented managing of Mark Lewin and sadistic antics portend serious problems for all Georgia scientific wrestlers.



THUMBS UP to Pat Patterson: Others pout following the loss of a title. Patterson knew Ken Patera cheated but vows to regain his title even if it takes his very life. The more Pat Patterson appears in wrestling arenas, the larger he becomes.



THUMBS DOWN to Leroy Brown: This huge man possesses deceptive speed and overpowering strength, yet insists on following the dictatorial demands of manager Sir Oliver Humperdink. Instead of slavishly obeying Humperdink, Brown should go out on his own and rejoin the human race.



THUMBS UP to Chief Jay Strongbow: A lesser man may have retreated into a catatonic stupor following the humiliating debacle visited upon him by Ernie Ladd. Not Strongbow. Instead of succumbing to his troubles, Strongbow grows more and more determined. This man's life is a lesson to us all.

(Continued on page 58)

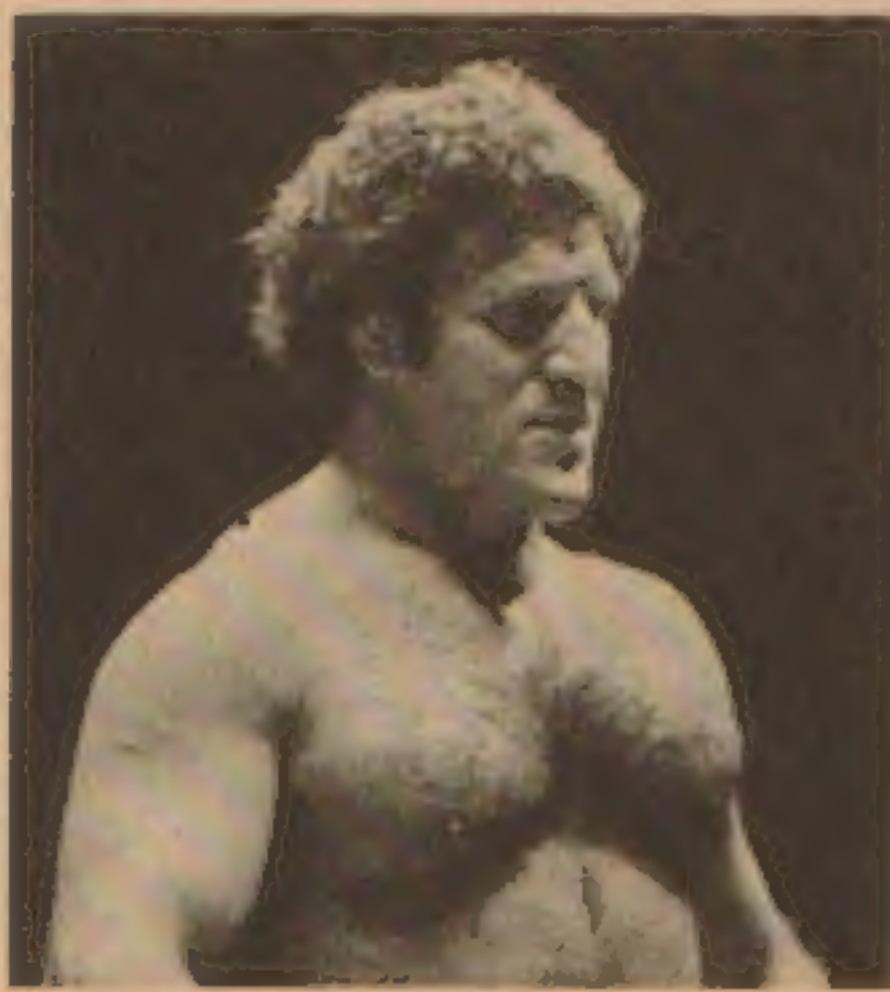
Thumbs Down



Wrestling Extravaganza

ON SATURDAY NIGHT, August 9, the greatest extravaganza in wrestling history was scheduled to occur in New York City's Shea Stadium. Promoter Vince McMahon signed what many experts consider the most talented array of wrestlers ever. Below is an exclusive preview of this exciting spectacular.

BRUNO GETS ZBYSZKO INSIDE A CAGE!



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

BRUNO SAMMARTINO VS. LARRY ZBYSZKO

Mindless hatred finds itself confined to a steel cage. Finally, this horrible feud may be settled. Match after match left each man bruised and dissatisfied. Why? The other still stood. Both Bruno and Larry vow to settle the issue once and for all. According to Zbyszko, there are two Living Legends, himself and Bruno. There's only room for one on this planet. After this match, wrestling fans will find out who'll hold that honor.



LARRY ZBYSZKO



HULK HOGAN

HULK HOGAN VS. ANDRE THE GIANT

Will earthquake tremors thunder through New York during this match? All wrestling eagerly awaits this Battle of the Super Heavyweights. Andre the Giant, 7-4, over 450 pounds, a gentle giant dangerous when aroused. Hulk Hogan, 6-8, 320 pounds, muscle upon muscle rippling through his mammoth blond physique. Only behemoths like these provide suitable opposition for each other. Andre despises Hogan and his bullying tactics. Hogan belittles Andre as a "foolish airhead with a brain of cotton candy." Obviously, someone's going to get hurt.



ANDRE THE GIANT

Inza in Shea Stadium



TONY ATLAS

TONY ATLAS VS. KEN PATERA

This match should determine the world's strongest wrestler. Ken Patera, holder of the Inter-Continental and Missouri State titles, Olympic medalist, incomparable braggart. Tony Atlas, Mr. U.S.A., owner of muscles other men envy, cat-like, intense, ambitious, former co-holder of the Georgia tag team championship. Atlas wants to show the WWF he belongs. Patera wants to destroy his foe. Another match fueled by hate and conflicting ambitions.



KEN PATERA



THE SAMOANS

THE SAMOANS VS. BOB BACKLUND AND PEDRO MORALES

Afa and Sika, whose WWF title reign represents everything deplorable about barbarism, challenged WWF individual champ Bob Backlund and former WWF champion Pedro Morales to a match. Actually, Lou Albano, manager of The Samoans, tendered the challenge, adding, "I don't think yellow-bellied Backlund and yellow-bellied Morales will show up, they're two of the biggest cowards around, they're yeller, they're green, they'll be black and blue when my boys finish with them."



BACKLUND & MORALES



FABULOUS MOOLAH . . .

FABULOUS MOOLAH IN ACTION!!

Long-time Women's Champion Fabulous Moolah leads a star-studded cast of top female grapplers. And many others complete this exciting night at Shea Stadium. □



. . . WOMEN'S CHAMPION

LOU ALBANO

Each month in THE WRESTLER, Captain Lou Albano will offer his unusual views on professional wrestling. Some may agree with him. Others

may say it's the ravings of a berserk maniac.

Still, no one can accuse the Captain of not being interesting. We feel this column is important, because no matter how hated a man may be, his opinions deserve to be heard

Talks Wrestling

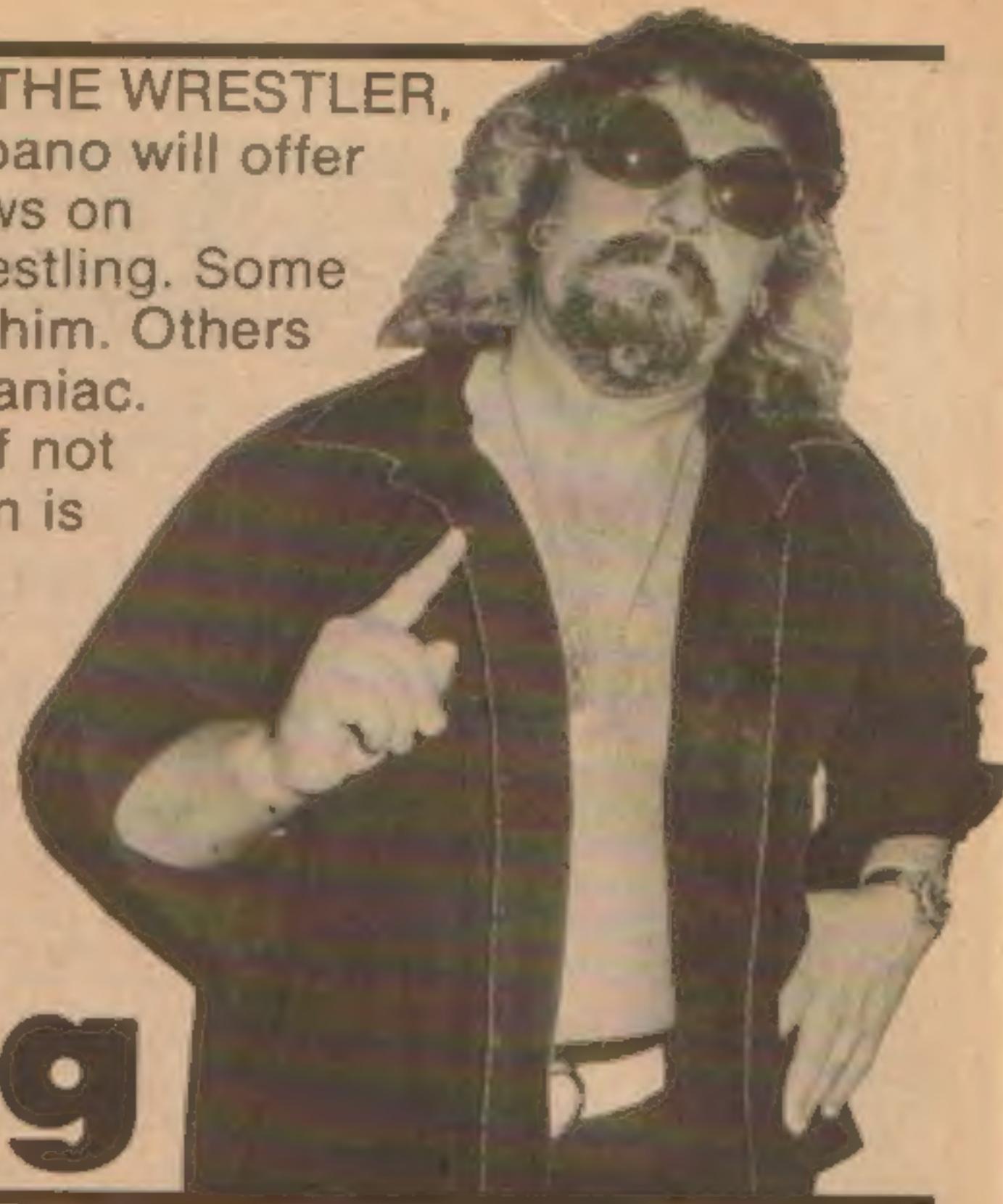
WHAT I'M ABOUT to say will shock the ignorant and naive out there. Hey, that's about 98 percent of the wrestling public. The Captain created a brilliant plan designed to rid the wrestling world of half-wits and subhumans.

Again, we're talking about 98 percent of the wrestlers.

Establish a commission to test the sanity and physical dimensions of the wrestlers. First off, a guy like Skoaland would fail. His IQ slipped below 40 the other day and he's down

to asking people to tie his shoes. He got lost in the men's room cubicle for an hour. Couldn't find his way out.

What kind of example does an Arnold Skoaland set for the youth of America? Managers should be fearless and wily and



"Here, Arnold 'The Pig' Skoaland examines the cuts of his 'champion,' Baby Face Bob Backlund. Skoaland goes crazy and starts to weep everytime he sees Backlund bleed a little. He'd better get used to the sight."

brilliant. Kids want positive role models, not burnt-out bobos like Skoaland.

This commission would ask someone like Skoaland a series of difficult questions, like what day comes after Thursday, how much is two plus two, and what's the capital of Peru? Imagine Skoaland dissolving in his chair, provided they find a chair big enough.

This commission would deal with the minds, or lack of minds in managers. I would be exempted since millions could attest to my overwhelming genius. Wiz and Fred might consider appearing before the commission, if only to show up airheads like Skoaland.

When inspecting wrestlers, the commission should focus more on their physical qualities instead of mental deficiencies. While all Skoaland has is mozzarella cheese upstairs, Bob Backlund doesn't even have an upstairs.

I'm not saying Backlund couldn't pass a strength test. Guy hasn't brushed his teeth in 12 years. A little Captain humor. Now everyone's chuckling and falling off their seats. I've got a great camel joke I'll tell next month.

Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I don't think wrestlers who are part animal should be allowed into the squared circle. Anyone with half a brain knows Backlund has many animal genes. Listen to him snort. Sounds like a dying bull. Or Pat Patterson. Doesn't he remind you of a dog?

Take Sammartino. Well, he's a special case. I'd feel guilty subjecting anyone that feeble to an exhaustive test. Besides, what could he do? Sammartino



"Doesn't Sammartino look like a mountain goat? Everytime we meet in the ring, the 'Living Legend' plays the fool. And believe me, that's no boast. Sammartino is a vastly overrated wrestler."

plays checkers well, as befitting a man of his 70-plus years. But call Bruno human? No way.

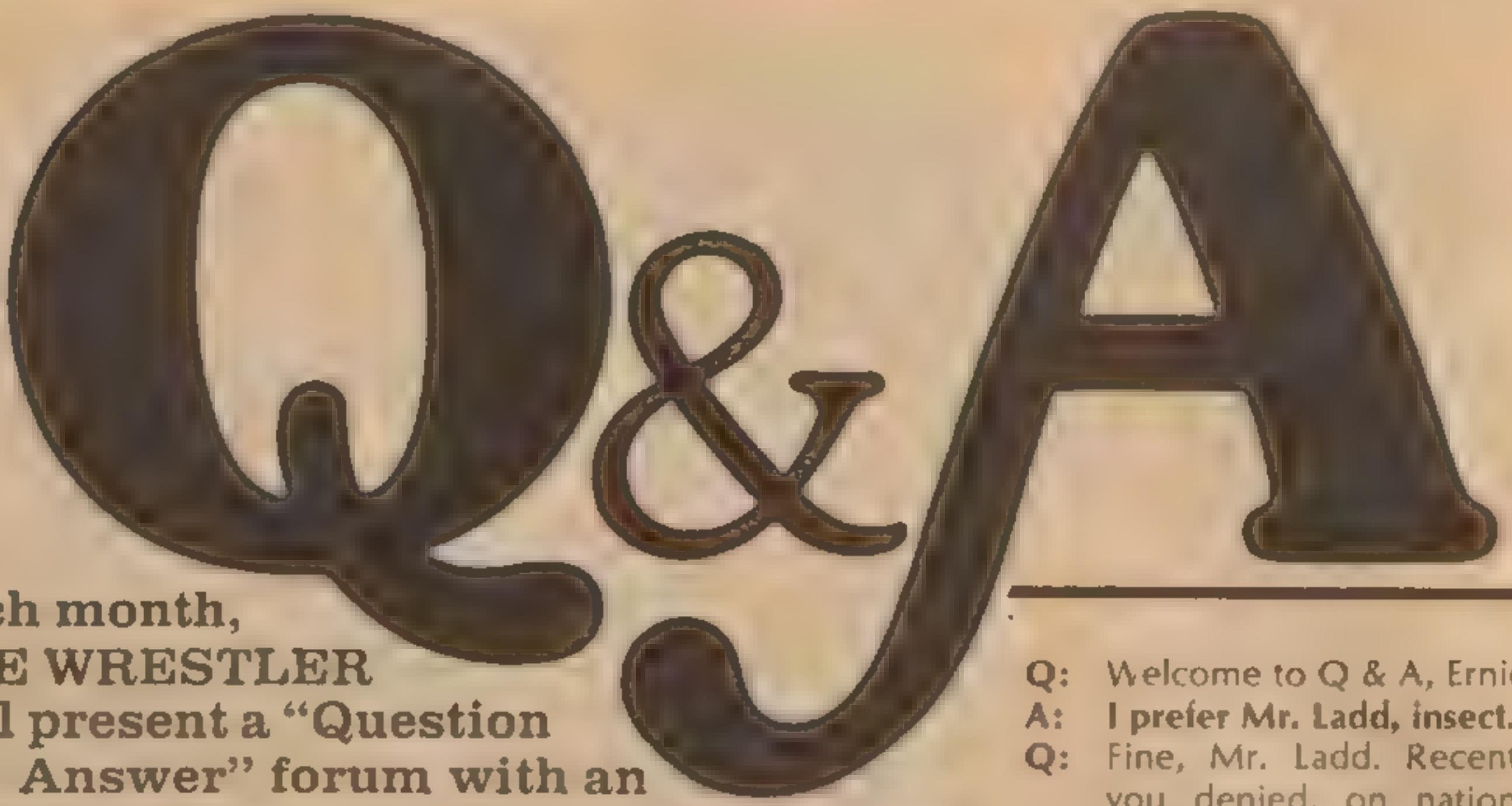
Anytime I see Sammartino, I'm immediately reminded of a mountain goat. Stupid and smelly. Somewhere along the line, Sammartino will bleat out

something incredibly stupid. Thinking about that, he already does. Ever hear him do interviews on TV? Pathetic.

Well, that's all for now, cretins. Hope you fans found someone to read my column to you. □



"I love to see Backlund's face when he is in pain. Here Sika has a stomach claw on him. Backlund is in so much pain, the referee cannot even understand him saying that he wants to give up."



Each month,
THE WRESTLER
will present a "Question
and Answer" forum with an
important figure in the wrestling world.
It is your chance to meet wrestling's
biggest stars as they answer the
questions uppermost on the fans' minds



At 6-9, 320 pounds, Ernie Ladd simply overpowers most of his opponents. Ladd boasts that Mr. Wrestling II (above) will have to retire after their next meeting.

- Q:** Welcome to Q & A, Ernie.
A: I prefer Mr. Ladd, insect.
Q: Fine, Mr. Ladd. Recently you denied, on national television, being the masked man who interfered in the Don Muraco-Manny Fernandez Heavyweight championship match.
A: That's right.
Q: It looks an awful lot like you.
A: It looks a lot more like Uvalde Slim, tubby Rhodes' pal. Anyone with an IQ over eight, which disqualifies you and the wrestling public, could see the resemblance between that average-size masked man and tubby Uvalde Slim. I can prove it.
Q: Oh?
A: Take a pencil and draw in Uvalde Slim's face on a photograph of that masked man. You'll see it was Slim.
Q: But no one's ever seen Slim.
A: And no one saw the masked man, either. But you termites quickly accuse King Ladd, don't you. I will remember this when my reign begins.
Q: Why would Uvalde Slim interfere and cost Fernandez his title?
A: Because Rhodes paid him to do so.
Q: Why?



ERNIE LADD

IN BOTH FLORIDA and Georgia, Ernie Ladd is synonymous with brutal violence. Many feel Don Muraco won the Florida Heavyweight title due to a tall masked man who leaped upon then-champ Manny Fernandez, knocked him silly and enabled Muraco to make the pin. Ladd denies he is that man. In the course of this interview, he denies many things.



Dusty Rhodes slams His elbow into the top of Ladd's head. Ernie charges that Rhodes paid Uvalde Slim to interfere on behalf of Don Muraco in his title-winning effort against Manny Fernandez

A: Because Rhodes turns red with jealousy every time he thinks of another young wrestler stealing his thunder. Rhodes knows how overrated he is, helped in, part by cretinistic journalists who fawn over him. Rhodes hopes to destroy Fernandez, humiliate him, embarrass him,

ruin him, thereby driving the half-wit out of wrestling and leaving Rhodes an open field.

Q: In Florida, Sir Oliver Humperdink manages you. What are your feelings about Humperdink.

A: Man's got a brilliant, shrewd brain, second only to mine, make that third

since I'm so far ahead of the rest of this puny planet that my intelligence hovers somewhere near Jupiter. But I respect the man 'cause he has guts, isn't afraid to take a chance, step in front and beat back the piddling idiots who would retard his progress.

(Continued on page 64)

IS MR. WRESTLING



Mr. Wrestling II pounces off the ropes
and crashes down on Baron Von Raschke

A HERO WITHOUT

G II

Von Raschke applies a chinlock.
Wrestling II's quest is a painful one.

MR. WRESTLING II is a proud man. Throughout his career and life, II has refused help. If he couldn't fight the battles alone, he preferred losing.

"A lot of people said I was pig-headed," said II, shrugging and smiling. "What can I say? This is the way I live. I have a lot to live for and many principles to fight for. I'm not about to change at

Struggling vainly against increasingly overwhelming odds, Mr. Wrestling II vows never to relax his fight against the forces of evil plaguing Georgia wrestling. Yet many wonder if II's battles are leading him on the road to destruction

this stage in my life. Anyway, I don't want to change."

Still, there comes a time and point where a man battles in vain futility, against overpowering odds and an assortment of villains he simply cannot defeat. In Georgia wrestling, sentiment increases that II futilely involves himself in a war against all the rule-breakers, a war he cannot win



HOPE?



And a war which might destroy him.

"I worry about II sometimes," said Tommy Rich, Georgia TV champion. "I really respect and like the guy. Heck, if it weren't for II, I might not be where I am today. I owe a lot to him and want to help, but he'd never accept any."

In the past, II focused his attention on one or two area rule-breakers. Now he's taking on everyone.

"Look, I know how talented II is," said Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods. "We've been through a lot together. I owe II my life many times over. And he's one enormous talent. But you can't fight the whole bloody world. Just can't. You spread yourself too thin and one day, pow, you weaken for one disastrous moment and you're a goner. Yeah, I'm worried about II."

Wrestling II holds Von Raschke's head with his left hand and delivers a series of right-handed blows.



Explaining II's motives isn't easy. In a man as complex as Mr. Wrestling II, motives become obscured by residue from other motives until analysis becomes impossible. Untangling this individual requires patience and the ability to look beyond the obvious.

Once attained, describing II makes a lot of sense. He fights because he must. Like many intelligent and ambitious people, II's motives clarify only through other's perceptions. Thus a single-mindedness may be classified as stubbornness. It isn't. Nor is pride the result of pig-headedness.

II is a battler, a warrior in the truest sense of the word. He doesn't sit back and say he must fight this man or take this match or do this or that. He acts, pure and simple. He has much to accomplish in this life and has no patience for those piddling people unable to understand or those desirous of blockading his path.

"Do I worry? I don't know, sometimes, alone, you know what I mean," said II. "Everyone has doubts, concerns, those awful black moments when the world closes in and you fear failure. Anyone who says otherwise is a bald-faced liar.

"Wrestling isn't the easiest profession. Hey, life isn't easy. If you want to achieve anything, you better be prepared to take your lumps. You can't win everytime. That doesn't mean you should shrug and walk away from defeat.

"Never do that. Learn from defeat. Try and understand why you lost so you might win the next time. But you also should learn more than just winning and losing. Standing for something matters more than winning.

(Continued on page 65)

THE RETURN OF PEDRO MORALES

HERE WAS A TIME in Pedro Morales' life when he thought the word "title" repulsive. He's not sure when the feeling started coming over him; all he knows is that the feeling was with him for years and years. It affected him professionally and it affected him personally. When your whole life is devoted to one ideal and then that ideal horrifies you, adjustments have to be made.

It took Pedro Morales almost five years to "think things out," before he finally straightened out his career objectives. He believes that the process is over. "All of the confusion is behind me now," he said. "I've



come back to the WWF with one thought and one thought only—winning the WWF championship."

Morales knows what it means to be a champion. He knows that there is a lot of bitter mixed in with the sweet. He was admittedly naive when he won the WWF title from Ivan Koloff on February 8, 1971. At the time, he could not imagine the negative aspects of being champion. He didn't consider the fact that his championship reign was beginning just three weeks after the conclusion of the legendary seven-and-one-half year reign of Bruno Sammartino.

"I knew there would be comparisons," Pedro said. "But

All wrestling eagerly awaited the return of Pedro Morales. The former WWF champion thrilled audiences for years with his unique brand of tough-minded scientific wrestling. Morales' matches made wrestling history. His return promises more legendary moments



Above: Pedro Morales is warned about hitting the helpless Baron Scicluna, but the temptation is irresistible. There is no stopping an angered Morales. Below: Pedro locks in a battle of strength in a match in Japan. After losing the WWF title, Morales wrestled around the world



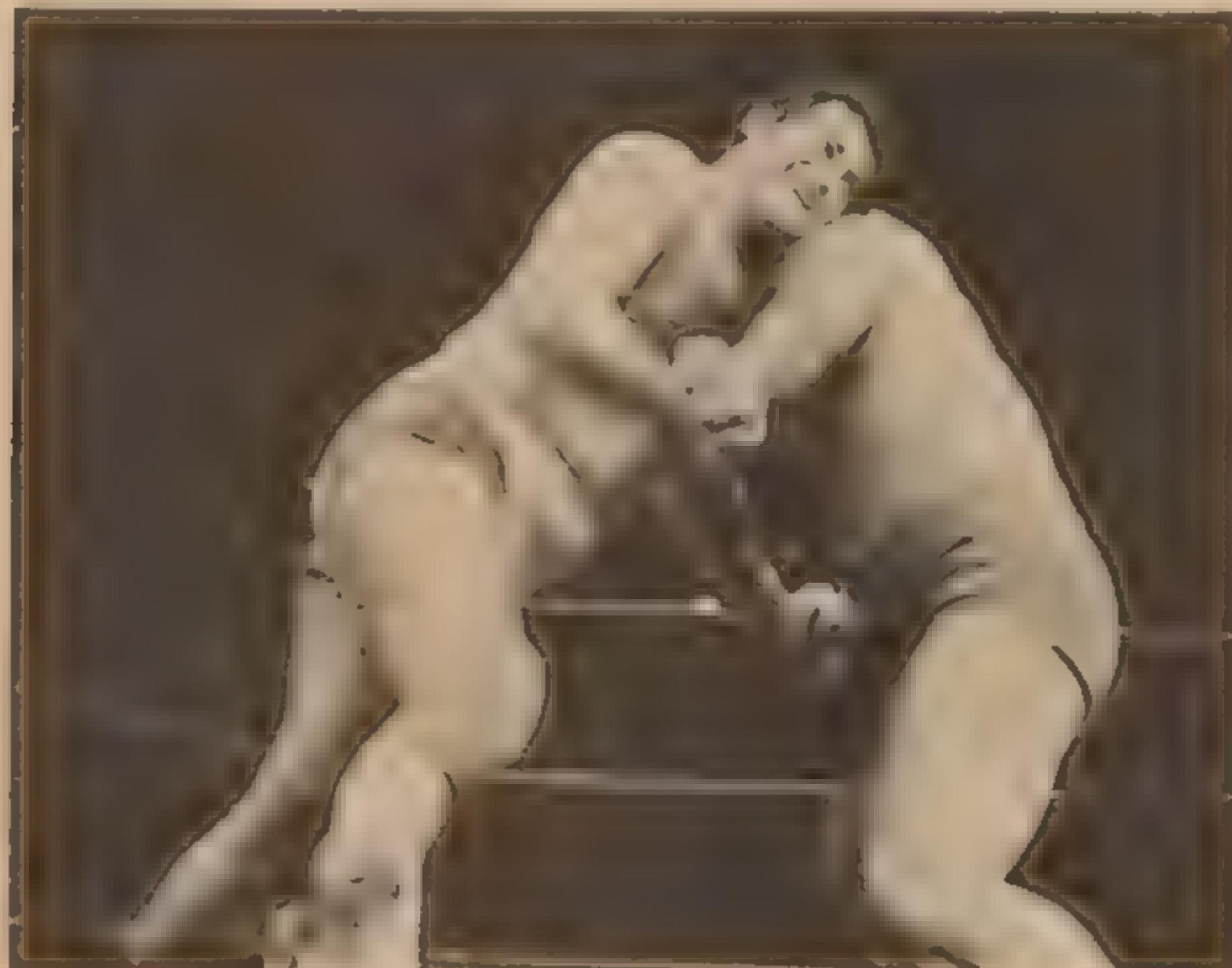
Morales wrestled in preliminary matches in the Mid-Atlantic to prepare for his return to the WWF.

are alone. You hold what everybody dreams of holding. Some will stop at nothing to get what they want. You live with the constant feeling that somebody is out to get you, and it's true: somebody is always out to get you."

"The actual matches never bothered me," he added. "Actually, that was the only thing that made it all worthwhile. I was proud to defend my title."

It was all that came before and after his matches that eventually soured Morales to his own title. Morales' reign came to an end on December 1, 1973, when he was defeated by Stan Stasiak in Philadelphia. "I don't mind saying now that, although I gave 110 percent in that match, it was almost a relief to lose the title."

Once out of the championship limelight, Morales was free to do many of the things the title had deprived him of. He was able to travel the world and test himself against the wrestlers of his choice, rather than always wrestling the man the WWF deemed the number one challenger. He was able to vacation when he pleased. He



I had no idea how long they would last. The questions were constant. 'Do you think you could ever be as popular as Bruno?' 'Do you think you could hold the title as long as

Bruno did?' That line of questioning added to the pressures of being champion. And let me tell you, being champion is no piece of cake. When you are champion, you



Morales defeats Scicluna (above) and Ivan Koloff (right) to win the WWF title in 1971.

was able to reacquaint himself with his family and his Puerto Rican homeland. He wrestled frequently, but he never wrestled for a title. "I was offered various title shots," he said, "but I didn't feel I was ready to put myself through the grind of being champion again."

Morales spent some time recently in the Mid-Atlantic region, where he maintained a low profile. "By the time I got to the Mid-Atlantic," he said, "I already knew that I was interested in regaining the WWF title. I wanted to wrestle there to get myself prepared for that opportunity. There is a lot of controversy in that area, a lot of feuds. It was hard not to get involved in all that, but I knew if I did, I could never just leave. It was a commitment I couldn't make."

Now, upon his return to the WWF, he has only one commitment—winning the WWF title. Ironically, the man standing in his path—Bob Backlund—has often been compared to Pedro. Both are outstanding defensive wrestlers who are virtually impossible to pin in a scientific match. Both have explosive



tempers that allow them to brawl with the best rule-breakers when provoked. Both cherish the same championship belt. "One thing I've learned," Morales said, "is that

comparisons are inevitable in wrestling. If you are secure with the comparisons, they can't bother you. If you are insecure with the comparisons, you'd better do some thinking." □

SUPERSTAR GRAHAM:

A cluster of reporters gathered around WWF champion Superstar Billy Graham's locker. Taunts and barbed jokes rocketed between journalists and wrestler. Graham postured about his fallen foe of the evening past, a wrestler of little repute whose career wasn't aided by the champion's systematic destruction of his limbs.

"I am the greatest, as always. I

will reign forever and destroy and maim everyone who dares stand in my way. I am invincible. I am close to a god. Maybe I am a god. Maybe I am immortal. Surely I am immortal in the wrestling arena. None can defeat me. You guys write that down, if you can write." Graham said, an impish, evil grin spreading across his handsome features.



Graham has some words for the Texas wrestling fans following his victory over Tiger Conway Jr., but he has nothing to say to the press. Though his style is unchanged in the ring (Graham chokes Conway, opposite right), much has changed in both Superstar's appearance and attitude

ADARK BEARD clings around the edges of his strong jaw, somehow compensating for the bald dome gleaming beneath the locker room lights. With head titled in suspicion, brown eyes narrowed, nostrils flared and hands on hips, Superstar Graham looks more sinister than ever.

He slammed the locker door shut, the loud whine ringing throughout the abruptly quiet room

"Got nothin' to say," he half-muttered, turning his back on reporters. Despite that vehement assertion, a barrage of questions hurled toward his huge back. One found a sensitive area, causing the bulging muscles to stiffen. Still Graham did not respond

This is the new Graham. He hasn't altered his belligerent, sadistic wrestling style one bit. But Graham won't speak to the press anymore. Scenes of an hour-long debate between Graham and press belong to the past.

Of course the inevitable question: Why?

"Billy feels the press gave him a bad shake in the past," said one of Graham's closest friend. "Billy thinks he was cheated out of the title and if that had happened to any other wrestler, the press woulda given both sides of the story more attention."

"He feels he's been misquoted and doesn't think the press deserves anything more than his total contempt. I don't blame him. The reporters love the Von Erichs and Bruiser Brodie and overlook any garbage they pull, but let Superstar Graham breathe wrong and the media climbs over him like a pig in a mudpen."

(Continued on page 46)

VOWS OF SILENCE,

Who is the new Superstar? BILLY GRAHAM
In past years, Graham conveyed a very definite image: vicious, mean, arrogant, inordinately self-confident. Every vile adjective devised by man could be applied to Graham. Now a new, different Graham emerges, one which puzzles the wrestling world.



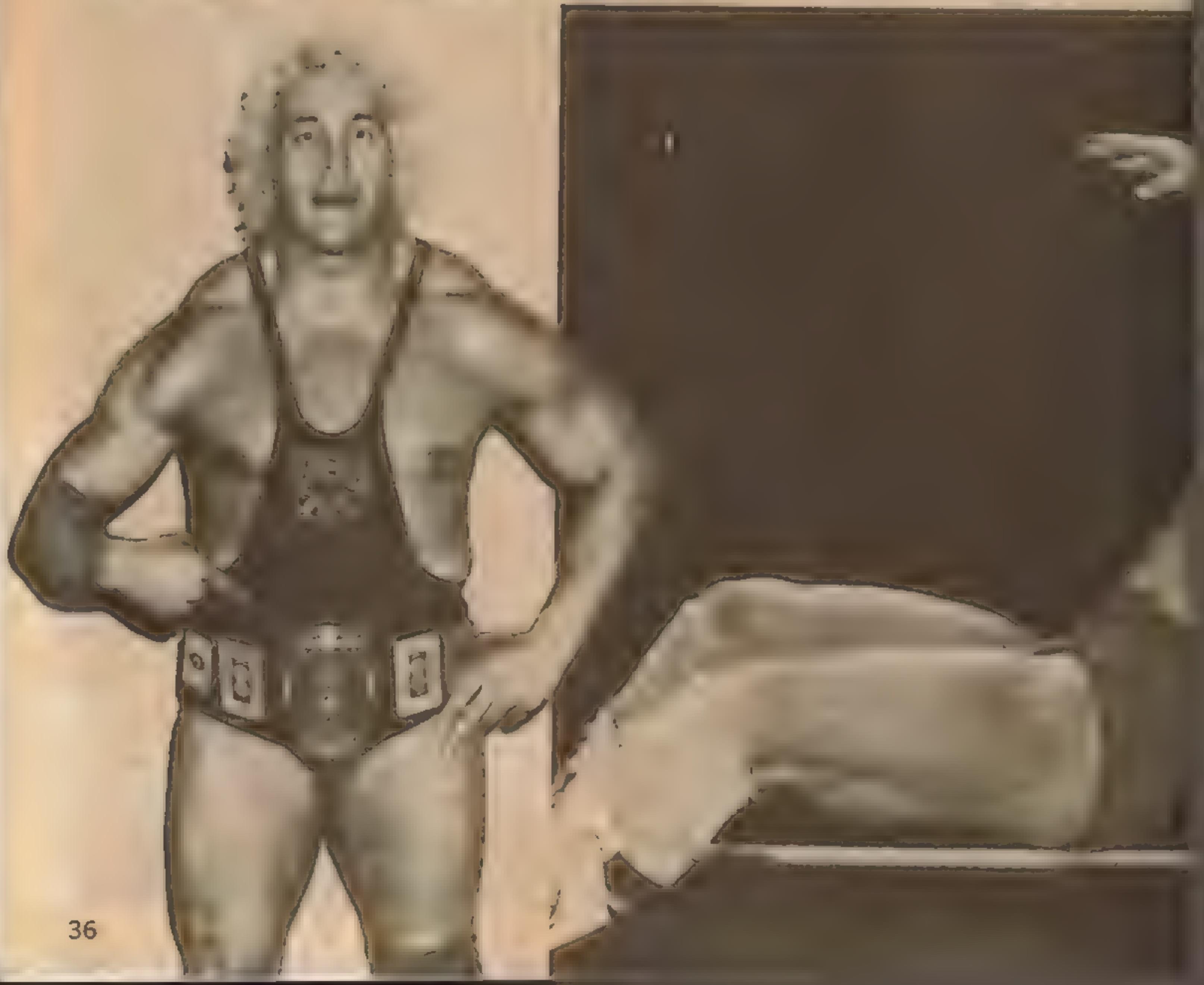
REIGN OF TERROR

KEN PATERA WINS THE MISSOURI TITLE FROM KEVIN VON ERICH!

WHEN THE SUN came up, Ken Patera was there to greet it. It's not because he's an early riser, he just never got to sleep that night. When a man wins the Missouri title, it takes a long time to celebrate

Ken had returned to his motel room after finding every place to celebrate closed. The last place threatened to call the cops if he didn't leave. There was no more champagne left and the owner wanted to get home before six in the morning. Ken left and made his way back to his motel room. Still, he was too excited to sleep.

The master plan was working. He could feel it all coming together. The Missouri title was the first giant step. He'd taken it and taken it well. The ex-champ,



Now Ken Patera holds two major titles, the Inter-Continental championship and the prestigious Missouri State title. Traditionally, the Missouri title acted as a springboard for an NWA title shot. Is Ken Patera looking at Race's belt? Or does he have even more sinister goals in mind?

Kevin Von Erich would have to admit that.

No one had to tell Patera what winning the Missouri title could lead to. He could go anywhere. Often, men who win the Missouri title go on to be NWA champion. Patera liked the sound of it: "Ken Patera, NWA king!" He'd enjoy going down in the record books as the man who beat Harley Race.

There were other titles, too, he had to consider. There was Bob Backlund's WWF crown. Patera

hates Backlund's guts and everything the champion stands for. Oh, would he like to send Backlund on the road to oblivion. Now, with the Missouri title, he might just be able to do it.

While he was at it, Patera considered Nick Bockwinkel and the AWA championship. Ken started in the AWA. It would be fun to come back there and be champion. He always wanted to show Bockwinkel who was the top wrestler. That would be a kick and

a half.

Patera let out a roar of laughter. There were all these wonderful possibilities opening up. Now that he combined the advantages of the Missouri title with those of his Inter-Continental championship, he could go anywhere and do anything. The rest of the world was arising to go to work when Patera finally drifted off to sleep.

Kevin Von Erich didn't get any sleep that night, either. He had returned to his motel room right after the match and hoped sleep would shut out the pain. Instead, his mind kept replaying images of the match. Over and over, he saw Patera looming above him. He tried to imagine escaping the final defeat but couldn't. When he thought of all the things he could have done, the things he should have done, Von Erich's flesh crawled. The agony suffered

(Continued on page 56)



Patera has Von Erich in the swinging neckbreaker (left), and it is only a matter of time before the pain becomes too unbearable for Kevin (above).

Friendship demands sacrifices.

As always, Dusty Rhodes goes beyond anything expected of mere mortals. When defending a friend, Rhodes disdains all conventional wisdom about self-preservation. Bubba Douglas is a friend. Bubba Douglas was in trouble. Rhodes never hesitated in coming to the rescue

DUSTY RHODES PROVES HE'D DIE FOR A F



THE ARENA WAS silent but for the sound of metal chains cracking into human flesh. The fans watched in stunned silence, hoping the horror would soon end.

Nikolai Volkoff hoped the torture would never end. As he brutally punished Bubba Douglas, every nerve in his body was alive with delight. Again and again, using the most horrible savage tactics, Volkoff battered Bubba mercilessly. Tragedy hung in the air like a suffocating fog.

Then, as if in answer to the crowd's prayers, Dusty Rhodes came running from the dressing room area. Rushing into the ring, he leaped at Volkoff and knocked the Russian to the ground. Douglas was spared further torment. Volkoff, seeing the look of vengeance in Dusty's eyes, worked himself free of the chain and rushed to the dressing room.

Douglas managed to get to his



Dusty Rhodes had seen enough. Bubba Douglas was to be battling Nikolai Volkoff in a Russian Chain Match, one-on-one. But Volkoff was receiving help from Sir Oliver Humperdink, and Douglas was in severe trouble. Despite the risks, Dusty had to do something to help his friend.

feet. Dusty went to offer Bubba aid. The brave grappler shook his head and hobbled to the dressing room by himself. The crowd gave him an ovation that shook the rafters. Dusty followed his friend, ready to help if he should falter.

Back in the dressing room, Douglas collapsed on the training table. Rhodes quickly summoned a doctor, who examined the man thoroughly.

"He should be fine in a few days," the doctor said, "though I'd like him to take some tests tomorrow. Can you have him in my office. Bubba knows where it is."

"He so wanted to do well in his

hometown," Dusty said with a shake of his head. "He didn't want Lakeland to see him beaten."

"Volkoff didn't beat him," the doctor replied, "because Bubba never gave up. That's more important than any victory in the ring. Bubba showed us courage. We're all proud of him." Dusty and the doctor walked a few steps before the doctor asked, "And what about you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Tomorrow, you wrestle Volkoff. He'll be looking for revenge. He won't care how he gets it, as long as it's painful and bloody. You know that."

"I've been in tough matches before."

"This could be your toughest. You knew that when you ran in tonight. I admire a man who can run in front of a firing squad. That's what you did tonight. Volkoff will be looking to kill."

Dusty didn't say anything. He looked straight ahead. His gaze was cold and hard. The doctor left him. Rhodes stood alone for a few moments, then went back to Douglas. Wearily, Bubba turned to Dusty and smiled.

"Thanks, pal," Bubba said, "I needed the help. Still, it wasn't a smart thing for you to do."

"Who does the smart thing?"

The next night, Dusty stood alone in his dressing room. He'd been furiously working on



Before departing for the dressing room with Douglas, Rhodes let Humperdink know his feelings on meddling managers

strategies all day. Now, as the moment approached, Dusty knew the strategies were meaningless. Tonight would be survival of the fittest. And the meanest.

The time came for Dusty to enter the arena. He thought back on last night. Given a second chance, would he have done anything different? Dusty knew, given 1,000 chances, he'd always come to the help of a friend. Well, fella, he thought, get ready to pay the price of friendship.

Volkoff paced the ring like a man possessed. Fire seemed to shoot out from his nostrils. When he saw Rhodes, a bloodthirsty grin spread across his features, turning his face into an ugly mask of hatred.

The match began. It's impossible to detail the maneuvers in this kind of brawl. Within minutes, the ring mat was slick with both wrestlers' blood. Volkoff's teeth looked like pearly fangs when he smiled through his scarlet face. The two men battered each other senseless without a moment's rest.

Eventually, these two battered humans slowed from exhaustion. Their movements were sloppy, painful to watch, and guided by a spirit only professional athletes can understand. Still, they continued to smash each other again and again, forcing themselves to make one more attack.

Finally, the buzzer sounded. The time limit brought an end to the bloody brawl. Rhodes walked slowly back to his dressing room. Fans were shocked to see him smile. He was thinking, "I'd still help Bubba again. I must be crazy. I hope I never get sane." □

Austin Idol's Message To Harley Race:

There was a time when Harley Race and Austin Idol were close friends. The NWA champion even paid Idol to cripple fan favorite Tommy Rich. But Idol saw the folly of rulebreaking and changed, leading to a fiery confrontation between the veteran champion and the rising young star

A bloody Austin Idol has Harley Race at his mercy outside the ring.



"I'LL PAY YOU BACK IN BLOOD!"

TATTERED REMNANTS OF an uncashed check lay scattered across Austin Idol's wine-colored carpet. He leaped up and scowled, right hand fisted and besieging the air.

"So that bum wants his money back, does he?" Idol gestured at the shredded green paper. "You give the champion of the world a

message for me. Harley Race, I'll pay you back in blood!"

Several months ago, Race paid Idol a few thousand dollars. For this vast sum, Idol swore to rid the Georgia wrestling scene of Tommy Rich, Mr. Wrestling II, Tim Woods, Kevin Sullivan, and any other scientific wrestler

"I was a different person then."

said Idol.

Still, Idol did his best to satisfy the terms of that deal. Night after night, Idol unleashed frenzied, savage assaults on the entire Georgia wrestling community. Ask the local doctors how successful Austin Idol became.

"I'm kinda ashamed," said Idol, shaking his handsome head.



Idol alertly catches a Race leglift (above), trips out the champion, and quickly applies a figure-four leglock (below). Race had to foul Idol to escape the devastating submission hold.

Wisdom prevailed as Idol altered his attitude and embraced the concepts of scientific wrestling. Two days after Idol announced intentions of wrestling cleanly, he and tag team partner Baron Von Raschke battled in a vicious feud.

"Didn't want trouble from the punk, but he mouthed off and I slugged him," recalled Idol, smiling.

That very same night, Race and Idol fought. And Von Raschke raced into the ring, attacking Idol in the youngster's first NWA title match.

"He'll be sorry," snapped Idol.

Bitterness increased in subsequent Race-Idol matches. Idol blamed Race for Von Raschke's interference, while Race derogated Idol's conversion.

"Well, I'll admit I blew one," said Race. "I thought the kid had some guts. Obviously he's a spineless yellow-bellied coward who has to hide behind Mt. Wrestling's mask strings."

Idol has one word for that "Bunk!"

This situation degenerated further when Race demanded his money back.

"I paid the creep good dough for a job he didn't have the guts to finish. Or even start," said Race. When Idol approached me,





With a shout to his admiring fans, Idol falls backward with a piledriver on Race Race, who paid Idol to batter potential challengers, wants his money back. Idol has other plans

begging for money. I told him he needed to learn character. I told him money didn't mean anything to me, but in this life, you gotta earn every cent you get or else you're a lousy welcher.

"So I asked him what kind of guts he had. He bragged about how tough and mean he is. I asked if he had the guts to clean up Georgia like I'm ridding Florida of bums.

"You shoulda seen his face when I told him how much I'd pay. It's worth every penny to clear out those masked ding-dongs," said Race.

Naturally, Idol's version differs.

"I get a phone call in the middle of the night, kinda early. I need my beauty sleep, not much of it anyway, heh-heh," said Idol. "This moronic voice gets on and asks me to do him a solid, says he's afraid. Once he started cryin', I recognized Race. Same whinin' sound."

"I didn't want any money. In those days, I woulda smashed heads for fun. But Race insisted on payin' me," continued Idol. "I've never turned down an easy payday.

"But when I decided not to break rules, I told Race the deal was off and I'd tear up the check. He demanded I return the check to him. I asked him if he didn't trust me, and he said about as far as he could throw me, around eight feet. Well, no one calls Austin Idol a cheat and a thief. I told the old bum if he wanted his money back, I'd carry it around in my hand. Let him take it from me. In the ring. I like a man."

Changing wrestling styles isn't easy. You run head-on into skeptical fans, cautious scientific wrestlers, and old buddies who won't let you forget the past. Only by maintaining poise and direction, can Austin Idol surmount the questions plaguing him.

"I'll show everyone I want to wrestle cleanly," snapped Idol. "Even if I have to break open Race's skull like last Tuesday's watermelon." □

INTRODUCING RICK McGRAW

THREE'S A LOT of little kid still left in Rick McGraw. The young wrestling sensation still feels a tingle every time he walks into an arena.

"Less than five years ago," he recalled, "I was sitting in the cheap seats, paid for by money I earned doing odd jobs. I remember watching wrestlers go to and from the dressing rooms. To be a part of that world was my dream. I swore I'd turn that dream into a reality."

Rick cheered for Bruno Sammartino, Ivan Putski, and Pedro Morales. "Those three were my heroes. I've studied them to learn their moves and strategies. The biggest thrill of my life was sitting with Bruno and discussing the best maneuvers to use against various wrestlers. Bruno



Rick McGraw clamps his powerful arms around the head of Jose Estrada. McGraw appears to have an excellent future in the sport.

Sammartino was having a serious discussion with me. For the first time, I really felt like a professional wrestler."

Rick's opponents considered

him a professional wrestler the first time he stepped into a ring. Though awkward like any rookie, he moved with a ferocity and intensity that marked him as special. He wrestles scientifically, but he wrestles hard. There's no little kid in him once he steps through those ropes.

"I'm having a ball," Rick says, "but I'm also taking this very seriously. A man can get hurt bad in this game; you have to be so careful. I plan to be around for another 20 years. A man has to take his career seriously."

Though young, Rick is wrestling wise far beyond his years. Arnold Skoaland, who's been working with him, is often amazed at what the young man knows.

"For every suggestion I
(Continued on page 62)

Rick McGraw defies conventional categorization. More than a mere scientific wrestler, McGraw displays that rare, natural skill which separates good wrestlers from world champions. Already, top managers have offered him lucrative deals



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

(Continued from Page 35)

In recent matches, Graham's game has taken on a vicious discipline. He appears more in control of himself, less attuned to his foe's tactics and less susceptible to erratic convulsions.

Since Graham won't explain, ringside analysis becomes the sole instrument of explanation.

"I'm not sure which Graham is tougher, the new version or the older version," said Tiger Conway after their brutal bout. "When Graham tore up the WWF, he'd go crazy on a moment's notice. Sometimes he'd just get this crazy look in his eyes and wham, there he'd go, off to the races, picking up chairs and trying to pull out every tooth in your head."



"But this Graham, while still plenty ornery, has more self-control. He concentrates more. He has more discipline in his maneuvers. Oh, sure, he can go bananas and fling you around by your earlobe. That'll never change."

"For my part, I don't agree with any athlete refusing interviews. You end up thumbing your nose at the fans. After all, the reporters are the public's representative. What



Superstar Graham seems to get the worst of a mid-ring collision with Conway (left), but he is certainly at an advantage with his opponent trapped in the corner (above). Superstar now proves his superiority with his actions in the ring, instead of words to the press.

about the public's right to know? Any wrestler who refuses to speak to reporters is saying the fans stink and don't mean anything to him.

"Why is Graham doing that? I don't think anyone knows that answer. I think Superstar Billy Graham will always remain a mystery to the world, a secluded, troubled kind of guy who doesn't understand why he isn't loved by everyone."

"In a way, I feel for the guy, know what I mean? He really wants to be liked and doesn't have the faintest idea how to go about it. Maybe someday he'll wake up," Conway said.

"Am I the best, the most popular, is there anyone on Earth who doesn't love me?" shouts WWF champion Billy Graham. The reporters nod and turn away. End of interview. □

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 10)



Bruno Sammartino traps Larry Zbyszko in the corner and pounds away with a series of lefts and rights. Bruno and Zbyszko are scheduled to battle August 9 in a cage at New York's Shea Stadium.

Zbyszko, he runs from the ring. A cage is the only way to settle things."

As this issue went to press we learned that Bruno will get his wish August 9th at New York's Shea Stadium. Larry Zbyszko is delighted with the match: "It's old man Bruno who runs away in our matches," he boasts. "Bruno, when I bash your head in that cage and break it open, you will plead for mercy—but you won't get it from me. I am the new living legend and I will smash the memory of Bruno Sammartino into the mesh wire for all his fans—both of them—to see."

Georgia Heavyweight champion Baron Von Raschke says that

Austin Idol is the "worst challenger he has ever faced." The Baron also goes on to say that Tommy Rich and Mr. Wrestling II are not much better. "I think I will take the Georgia belt back to Germany and defend it against some of my countrymen. At least they have guts, not like these 'slimy Americans in Georgia.'

Blackjack Mulligan's cousin Luke has joined him for a spell in the Mid-Atlantic region. "Cousin Luke just got sprung from a mental hospital, so I fixed him up here at my place and he's helping me beat up dudes like Masked Superstar and Enforcer Luciano, that Mafia

creep from Detroit." . . . The Russo Brothers, Jack and Jerry, are new Florida tag team champions after their spectacular victory over Bryan St. John and Stanley Lane.

The Assassins, who hold the Georgia tag team belts, are being chased by the duo of Dusty Rhodes and Ole Anderson . . . Young Terry Taylor and two other upstarts in Georgia, Don Diamond and Kid Collins, are racking up incredible victory streaks. Look for big things in the future from these youngsters . . . The tag team tournament to determine new Mid-Atlantic tag team champions is over. Matt

(Continued on page 48)

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 47)



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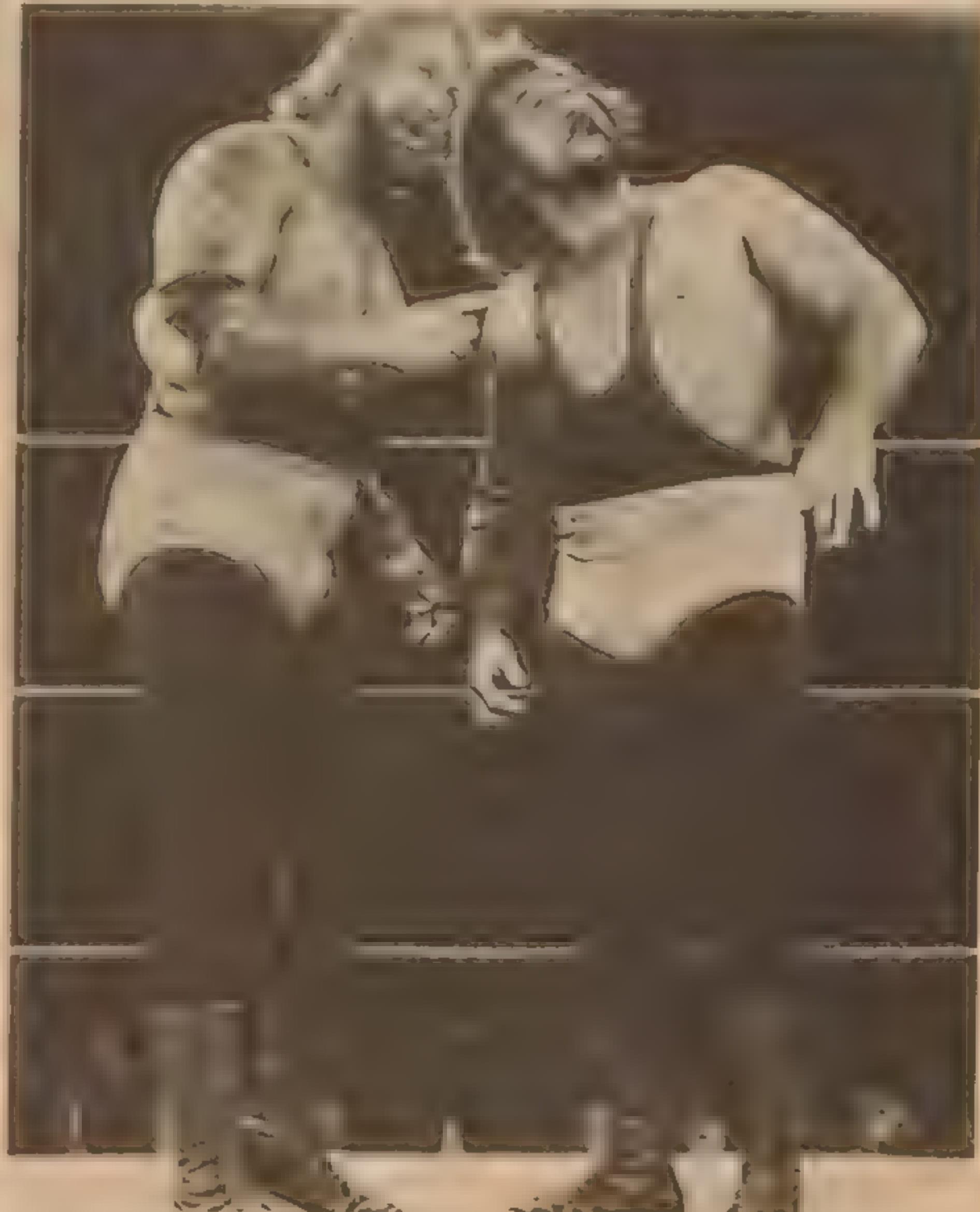
Borne and Buzz Sawyer have won the honors

Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood have lost the NWA tag team title to Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens . . . Gino Hernandez said he refuses to wrestle El Halcon unless the popular masked Mexican unmasks. So that's just what he did—and he gave Gino a well deserved beating! . . . Mil Mascaras' brother, El Sicodelico, inactive for some time in Texas, has made a successful return to the state's rings.

Playboy Buddy Rose now wants to be called "General" Buddy

Rose. "Since I have been advising the Kiwis during their tag team matches, I have realized what a brilliant strategist I am," Rose is quick to point out. "Lowlifes like Roddy Piper, Rick Martel, and Dutch Savage only wish I could be in their corner to guide them through their matches—but they are born losers. I only deal with people like myself—winners." He's also very modest.

Hulk Hogan keeps complaining that he gets no competition in the WWF. Look out Hulk, we've just found out that you are contracted to grapple Andre the Giant. "So



Playboy Buddy Rose takes full credit for the success of the Kiws (above). Rose will only advise wrestlers that are 'great,' as he claims he is. Rose has never been known for his humility.

what!" Hogan says about his match against Andre. "He's an overblown whale. I will beat Andre in less than five minutes. Mark my words."

Von Erich family, Kevin, David, Kerry, and father; Fritz, have been teaming in eight man outings in Texas. They're unbeatable... The Great Antonio barged in on a boxing press conference in Montreal to challenge Muhammad Ali... John Studd and Tito Santana have signed to wrestle in



The Great Antonio interrupts a Montreal press conference for Roberto Duran to challenge Muhammad Ali. He apparently came to the wrong room.

the AWA... Terry Funk is considering offers from WWF promoters. He says he'll come into the federation only with the stipulation that he can get a shot at champion Bob Backlund.

Dusty Rhodes is in the news with his latest statement about NWA champion Harley Race:

"I said that I did not want to wrestle Harley Race any more. Well, I need to know if my fans want me to stick to my guns or go after Race one more time. Tell me with your letters and I will do what you say."

Okay fans, write to Dusty c/o What's Happening, THE WRESTLER, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

And that's what's happening. See you next time. □

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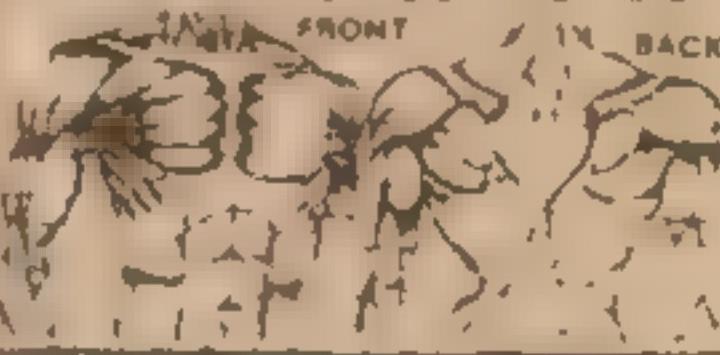
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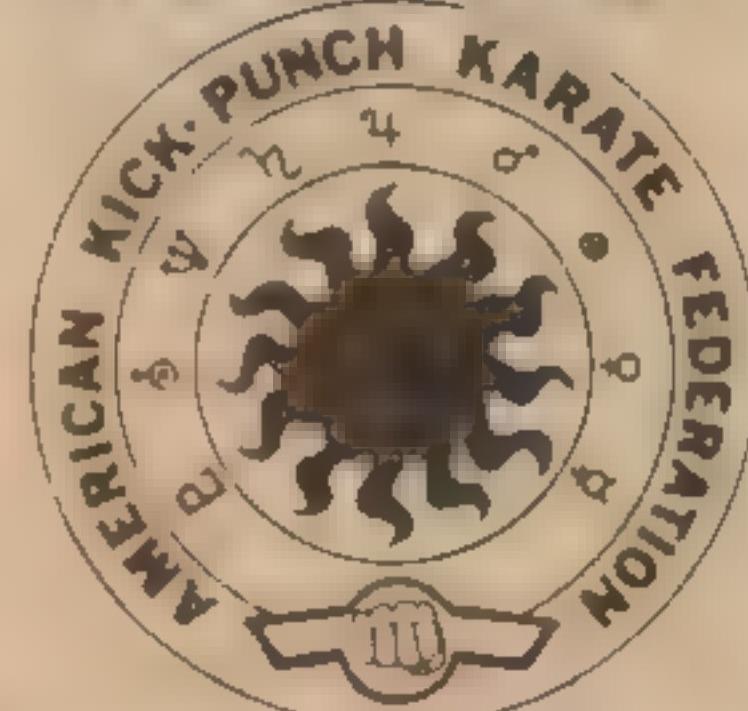
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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from Page 8)

and fear my arrival in their area 'cause I'll whip their faces and make 'em eat their own tongues."

Q: "Could you please tell me if the Masked Superstar invented the Cobra Hold?"—Sheila Murphy, Rossville, GA



While Masked Superstar admits he did not invent the Cobra Hold, he claims to be number one at its execution.

A: "Now, I have never lied to my adoring public, unlike lesser talents who must toot their own horn because they have the skills of a cockroach," said the Masked Superstar. "While I am not positive I invented the Cobra Hold since it's possible someone at exactly the same moment in time used my move, I can say the Masked Superstar is the foremost practitioner of this brilliant maneuver."

Q: "What is the ultimate objective of the Gino Hernandez-Gary Hart Texas army?"—Toby Tyler, Houston, TX



Manager Gary Hart and his protege' Gino Hernandez have a list of wrestlers they would like to run out of Texas.

A: "We have many objectives," replied Hart. "We want to clean up wrestling and get rid of the stupid, no-talent clods in this state. Already we've driven that slob Mark Lewin the hell outta this state. Next on our list are the Von Erich sisters. We want them outta this state inside of two months or they'll leave stretched out. Every single one of them."

Q: What does Verne Gagne think of the current state of professional wrestling?"—Kathy Haskell, Minneapolis, MN

A: "Kathy, I think professional wrestling has never been healthier," Gagne answered. "Every time I go to the arena and see these fine youngsters I get a glowing, good feeling in my gut. Wrestling needs the young kids, the ones willing to pay the price of hard work and long hours for the golden opportunity to win a title."

Q: "Has Mr. Wrestling II ever wrestled without his mask?"—Chris Lass, Atlanta, GA

A: Mr. Wrestling II's response: "No comment." □

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CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

(Continued from Page 12)



Harley Race had to battle back from a brutal assault by Dick Murdoch to retain his NWA championship.

KANSAS CITY, KA—Correspondent: David Covington—NWA champion Harley Race re-entered the past in this title bout against Dick Murdoch. Not only is Kansas City Race's hometown, but this was the site of his first NWA title win over Dory Funk Jr. in 1973. Murdoch unleashed his entire array of holds as he attacked Race with suplexes, an abdominal stretch, a sleeper, a piledriver, and the deadly brainbuster. Still, Race surmounted this deadly arsenal and hung on for the win.

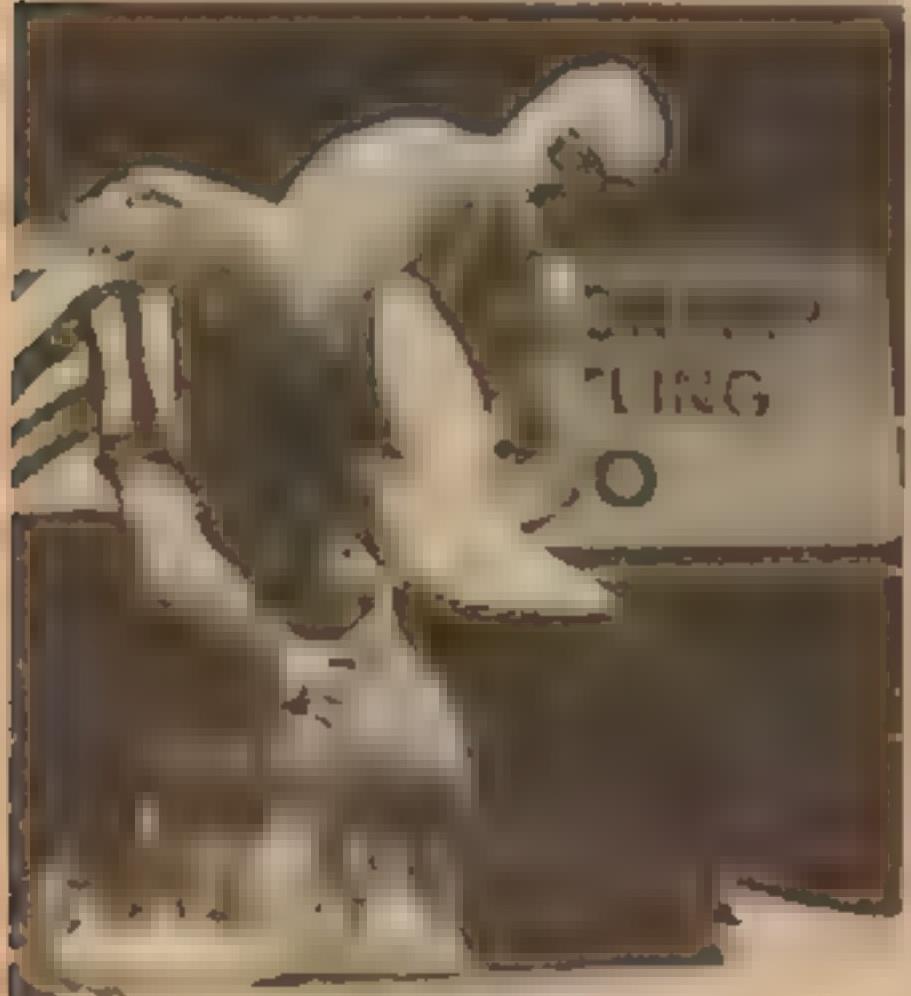
In other bouts, Bruiser Brodie retained his Central States crown over Bulldog Brown when both men were disqualified for bringing chairs into the ring . . . Central States tag team champs Pak Song and Takachiko stopped Jerry Oates and Kevin Von Erich . . . George Wells beat Ron McFarlane

MORRISTOWN, NJ—Correspondent: Chuck Purzner—There was a whirlwind of action at the Mennen Ice Arena when Larry Zbyszko confronted Pat Patterson. Even before the bell sounded, Zbyszko pounded away

with cheap shots. Stunned, Patterson couldn't prevent Zbyszko tossing him out of the ring. When fans chanted "Bruno, Bruno," Zbyszko went crazy and flung Patterson through the ropes. This time Patterson didn't return.

In other matches, Larry Sharpe piledriven Angelo Gomez . . . The Samoans nicked Rene Goulet and Gorilla Monsoon . . . El Olympic won by disqualification over Moose Monroe.

ORLANDO, FL—Correspondent: Earl Roop—The main event was a special challenge match pitting Mr. Florida and Bugsy McGraw against Super Destroyer and Nikolai Volkoff. McGraw seized Volkoff's arm and worked it over until the helpless Russian tagged partner Super Destroyer



Aided by Sir Oliver Humperdink, Nikolai Volkoff and Super Destroyer defeated Bugsy McGraw and Mr. Florida.

for help. After that, the match deteriorated into a wild brawl. At one point, Mr. Florida attacked Sir Oliver Humperdink as the action grew frenzied. Distracted by Humperdink, Mr. Florida didn't see Volkoff flying toward him and fell beneath the fiendish Russian's huge body.

In other bouts, Don Muraco stopped Steve Keirn . . . Manny Fernandez and Jim Garvin beat Bryan St. John and Stanley Lane . . . Jack Brisco whipped Mr. Saito

Bubba Douglas defeated Reggie Parks. □

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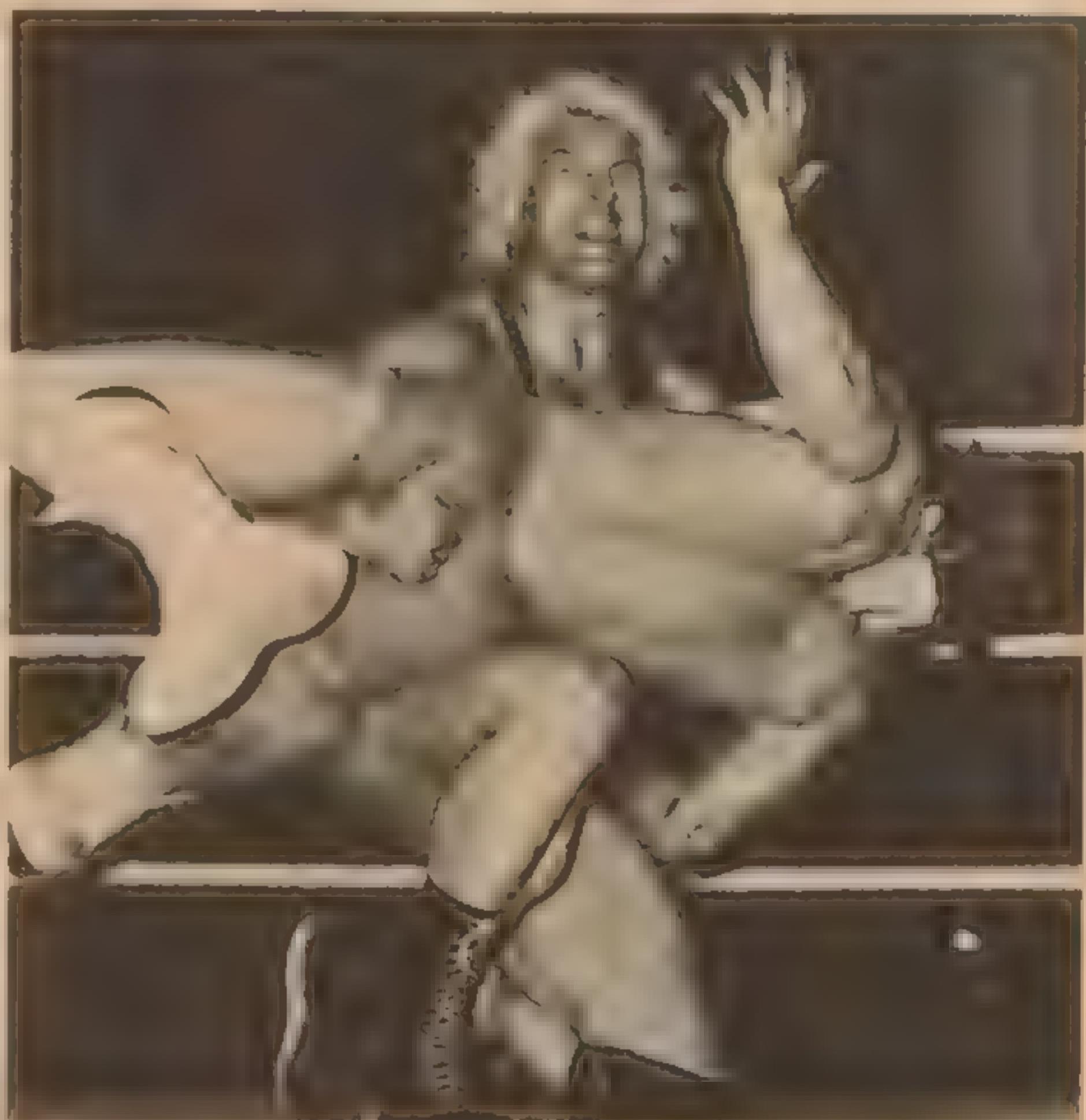
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KEN PATERA

(Continued from Page 37)



Patera lifts Von Erich high in the air and drops him across his knee (above). Ken must use all his strength to ward off Kevin's attempted clawhold (below). Patera was successful.



during the match was nothing compared to the agony suffered

Patera took my title, Kevin was forced to realize. Sure, a lot of his moves were illegal, moves I wouldn't do, but he took my title. Where's the justice in this?

Then Kevin thought back to something his father told him when the young man first started wrestling professionally.

"The first thing you'd better learn," Fritz informed his son, "is that there's no justice in sport. Someone either wins or loses. You could be going great and a muscle will tear. You lose. Someone gets away with a cheating tactic. You lose. Don't expect right and wrong to ever enter into the picture. You'll be hurt, you'll be cheated, and you'll be humiliated. That's what sport can do to you. Are you ready for that?"

VICTORY SPORTS BACK ISSUE

YEARBOOKS



Kevin's muscles bulge as he applies a hammerlock. There will be many more opportunities for this young star.

"You forgot all the good things," Kevin replied with a smile.

"I didn't forget them. You already know them. It's up to you to decide whether or not the good makes up for the bad."

That night, with the agony of defeat fresh and painful, Kevin thought back to that conversation. He knew his father was warning him about a night like this. In a universe of only winning and losing, Kevin lost. Was it worth it? "It's up to you to decide whether or not the good makes up for the bad."

About the time Ken Patera drifted off to sleep, Kevin decided he'd rather be a professional wrestler than anything else in the world. If nights like this were the price he had to pay, that's the way it goes. It reminded him of something else his father told him. "Nobody ever gives you anything worthwhile. You have to work for the good things in life."

The next day, the entire wrestling profession was discussing Ken Patera's conquest. They all wondered where he'd go and what he'd do next. Bets were placed on which title he'd pursue. Harley Race, Bob Backlund, and Nick Bockwinkel once again studied up on Ken Patera.

No one noticed Kevin Von Erich making a vow to take his title back. Often, the most important things go unnoticed. □



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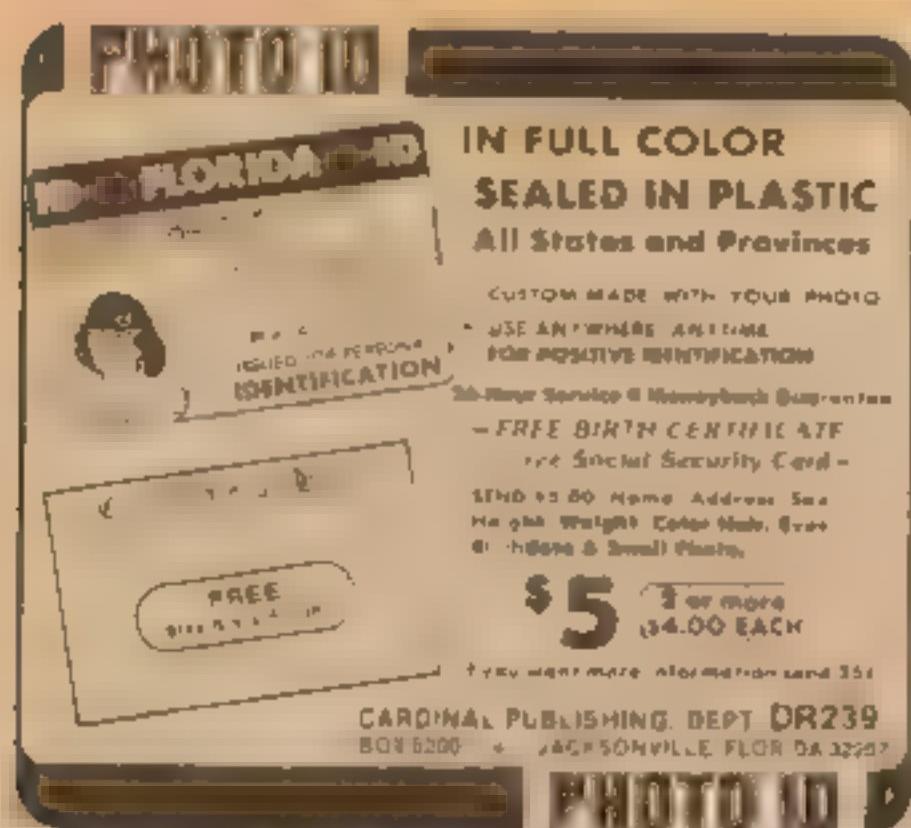
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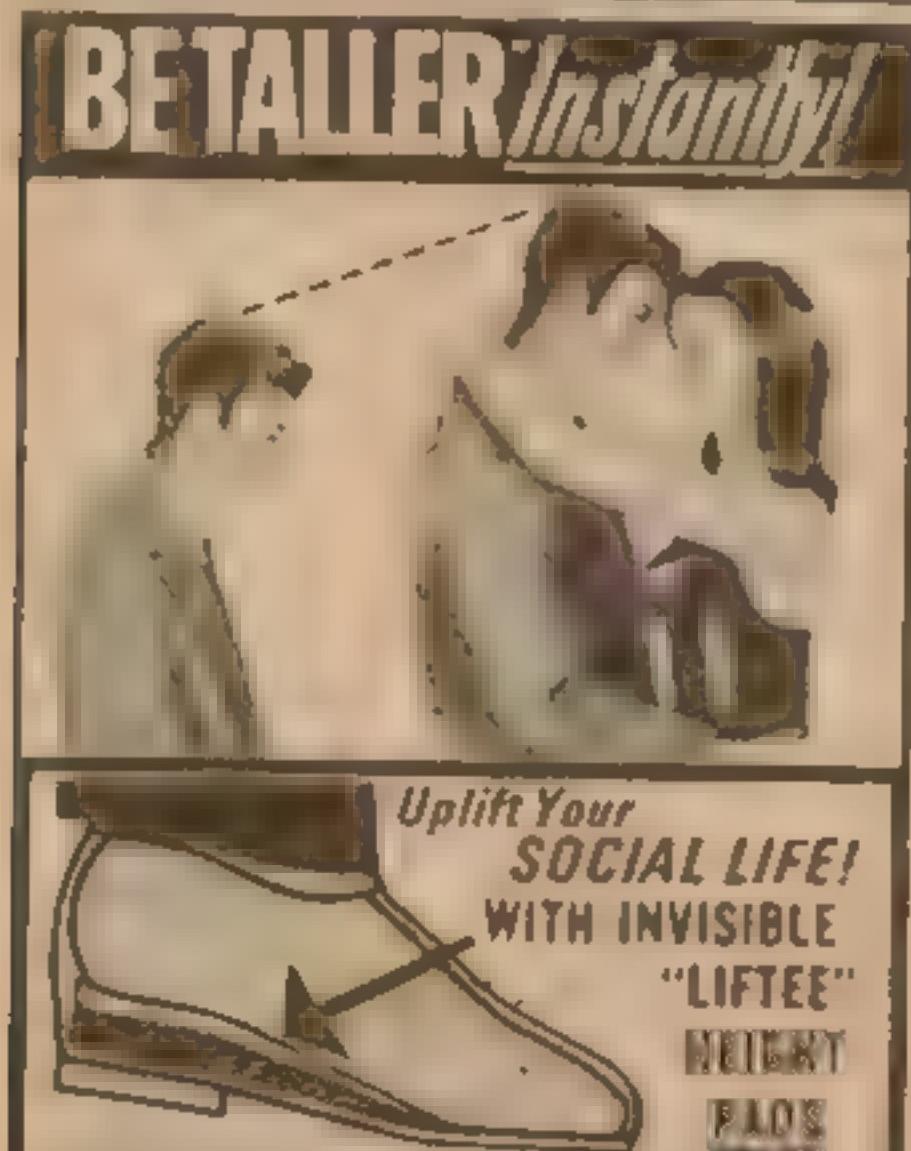
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THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

(Continued from Page 18)



THUMBS DOWN to Hussein Arab: So the big-mouthed Iranian believes he can topple Mid-Atlantic wrestler after wrestler, huh? Arab, or the Iron Sheik (as he sometimes calls himself), may find competition pretty stiff, particularly if he persists in antagonizing foes prior to every match.

THUMBS UP to Jay Youngblood: This kid's a tough, courageous grappler. He's had to endure a lot of adversity and jealousy from many older, less talented wrestlers. Despite such personal difficulties, Youngblood and partner Rick Steamboat regained their NWA tag team titles.



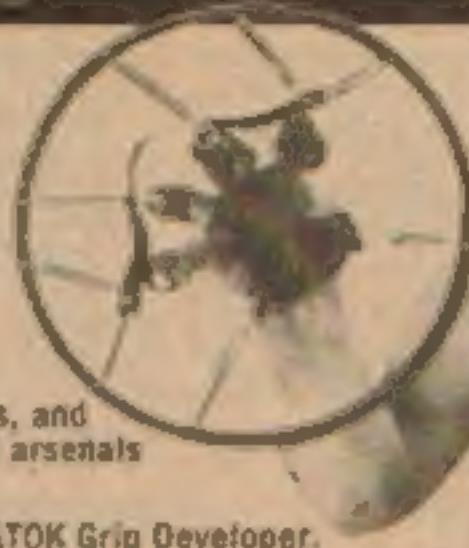
THUMBS UP to Mad Dog Vachon: Critics don't disturb Vachon. He does whatever he wants and the heck with any criticism or ringside snipers. This is his style of wrestling and he's proud of it. He's never accommodated anyone except himself and, in a way, this is quite admirable.

THUMBS DOWN to Bob Backlund: Obsession hurtles men along uncertain, perilous paths. Backlund has found himself embroiled in bitter, bloody feuds before, but this fresh war against Ken Patera represents a graver menace to the young champion's title reign. Backlund should step back and analyze the situation. Before it's too late. □



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RICK McGRAW

(Continued from Page 45)



McGraw has amazed the experts with his feats of strength. The popular young star throws the 300-pound Bob Duncum across the ring. When the Texan landed he had a dumbfounded look on his face.

make," Arnold says, "Rick comes up with three. Often, he's right. I've never met a guy his age who knows so much. He's a student of the sport, and there aren't that many around. By 'student' I mean someone who delights in learning how various maneuvers work together, even if he can't use them himself. Most guys just care about what they can use and what their opponent does. Rick cares about everything."

"When Rick is finished wrestling," Bob Backlund believes, "he'll become the

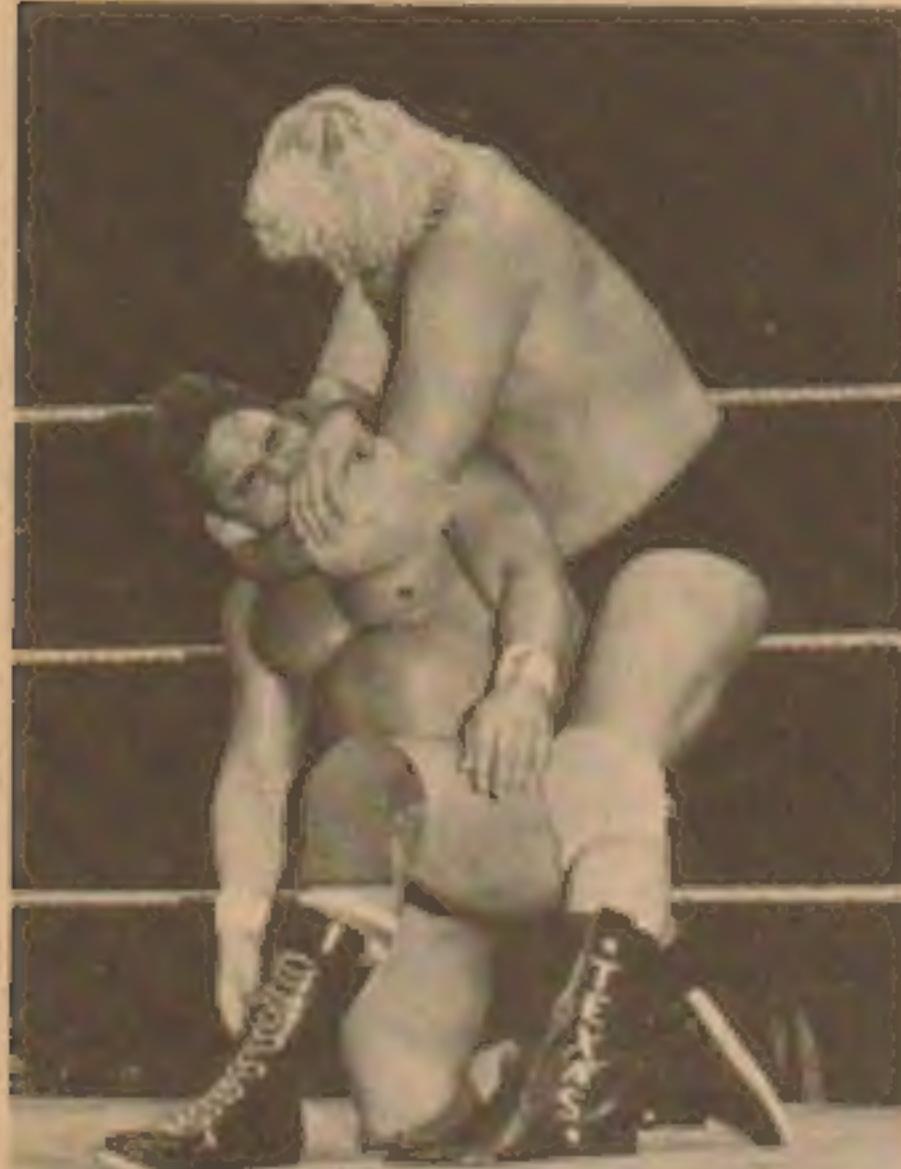
greatest manager this sport has ever seen. He was watching me work out, and noticed I swung my leg out on a certain maneuver. Rick suggested I jerk the leg up instead of swing it. I tried it his way and it was perfect.

"What's really amazing is that for some guys, swinging the leg works best. But Rick saw me work and knew jerking the leg would work best for me.

"You can see it in his own wrestling. He doesn't make stupid moves. His motions are intelligent, economical, and usually right. When he gets a

veteran's instincts, there'll be no stopping him. He'll be a pleasure to watch, like some great work of art.

"I don't use the word 'great' often. That's a special word I use for special people. Rick has the potential to be great. A guy with his ability comes along once every five years. In fact, Rick might be the kind of wrestler that comes along once in a lifetime."



Not all of his efforts are winning efforts, but McGraw is still learning. Duncum applies a headlock (above).

When Rick hears this kind of praise, he resembles a kid who got a good report card. It's hard to realize this is the same man who becomes a serious professional athlete every time he steps into a ring. It gets easier once you listen to Rick talk.

"Though I won't ever be perfect, I can be close," he said. "It's that struggle to have the perfect match that keeps me going. I can see it in my mind's eye. And I can have moments of it during a match. When you're in those perfect moments, everything flows and moves with infinite ease. I feel it maybe five times, for a total of maybe 30 seconds. It's the best feeling in the world. I feel sorry for people who aren't professional wrestlers. They never know how wonderful a person can feel." □

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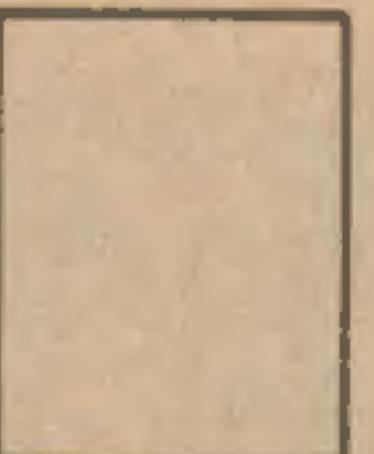
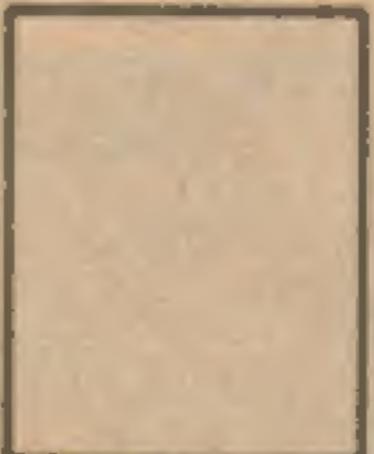
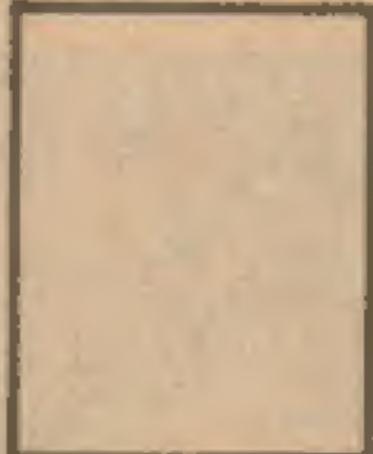
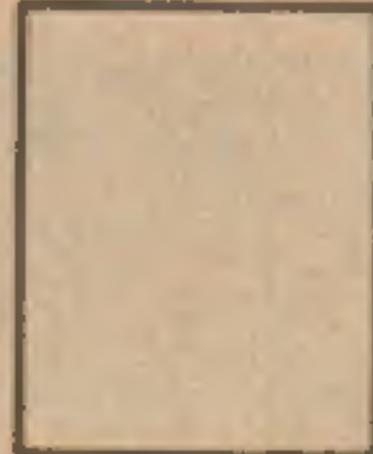
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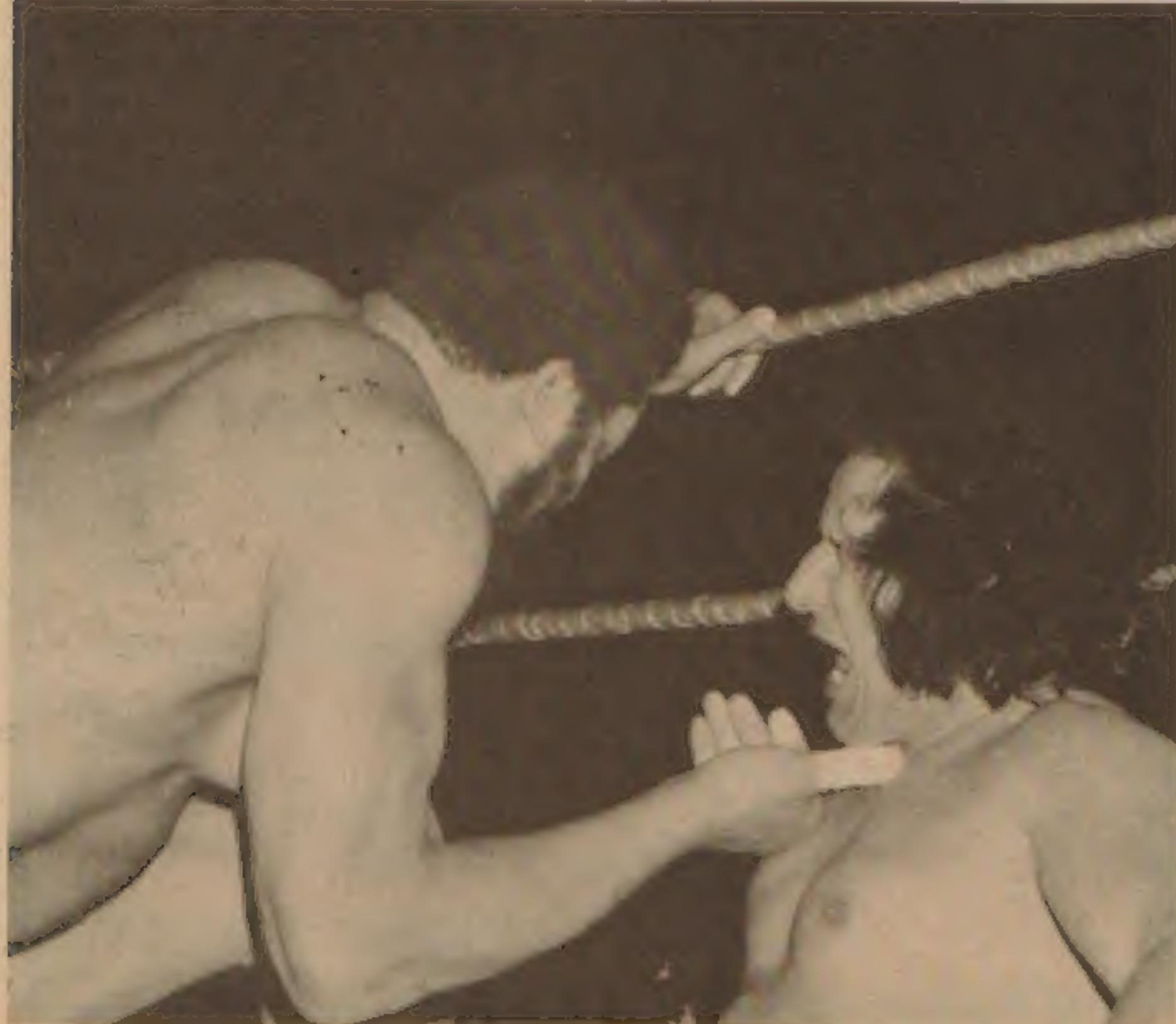
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— Q & A —

(Continued from Page 27)



Throughout his career, Ladd has been accused of intentionally injuring opponents with his taped right thumb. Ernie appears to be doing just that against Wrestling II (above) and Chief Jay Strongbow (below).



Q: In addition to Florida, you're also wrestling in Georgia.

A: Wrestling is when I have competition. What I'm doing in Georgia is easy paydays, turkey.

Q: You and Chief Jay Strongbow had quite a match.

A: What fun (laughs).

Q: Want to talk about that?

A: Oh, just another night in the life of a King. Strongbow brought this stupid hat into the ring and smacked me with it. I took that stupid hat and stuffed it down his throat.

Q: According to both printed and filmed reports, you tied Strongbow up and plucked the feathers on his Indian headdress and stuffed the feathers into his mouth, a complete insult to a man of the Indian race.

A: If it's such an insult, wouldn't he have done something about that, though it didn't happen the way you say. Sorry, I forgot. I mean a man might do something, not Strongbow. Flea.

Q: You and Mr. Wrestling II aren't exactly bosom buddies.

A: Who's that?

Q: Mr. Wrestling II.

A: Oh, he's retiring.

Q: We haven't heard anything about that.

A: How can anyone wrestle with two fractured legs, a separated shoulder and half a skull.

Q: That happened to II?

A: When we wrestle, it will.

Q: Mr. Ladd, any final comment?

A: Not to you, twerp. I do all my talking in the ring. □

MR. WRESTLING II

(Continued from Page 30)



Wrestling II leaves the ring with the chair that Von Raschke had hoped to use as a weapon.

"I want to stand for a set of principles in wrestling and my life. I don't want these maniacs, the nuts without morals and ideals running amuck and taking over wrestling. I know I'm outnumbered. So? I've been outnumbered before. Is that any reason to give up?

"Hell no, it isn't. You keep on fighting, battling the likes of a Baron Von Raschke and any other rulebreaker until you've whipped him and sent the creature scurrying back into its hole. That's what I aim toward.

"Okay, so I'm getting excited. I'm concerned about the future of wrestling. I want to stop these rulebreakers. If my friends want to join me, so much the better. But I don't want any of my friends, like Rich or Mr. Wrestling, fighting by my side simply out of friendship for me. That's not what I want.

"They should fight because they believe in the fight. Otherwise," II shrugged. "Oh, tell my fans not to worry. I'm a tough cookie." II grinned and left the dressing room, the cheers of the crowd darting through the half-closed door. □

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